



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

Aboriginal Languages and Torres Strait Islander Languages in the Australian Curriculum

Aboriginal languages and Torres Strait Islander languages are the original languages of this country. Through learning them, all students gain access to knowledge and an understanding of Australia that can only come from an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander perspective. The languages by their nature embed this perspective. Learning to use these unique languages plays an important part in the development of a strong sense of identity, pride and self-esteem for all Australian students.

Why is learning Aboriginal languages and Torres Strait Islander languages important in schools?

Learning Aboriginal languages and Torres Strait Islander languages meets the needs and rights of young people to learn their own languages, and recognises the significance of these languages in the language ecology of Australia.

For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, learning their own language can positively impact on their overall learning and achievements. It enables them to develop a wider recognition and understanding of their language, culture, land, sea, Country and Place, and this contributes to their wellbeing.

For all students, learning Aboriginal languages and Torres Strait Islander languages provides a distinctive means of understanding the Country in which they live, including the relationship between land, the environment and people. The ongoing and necessary reclamation and revitalisation of these languages also contribute to reconciliation.

What is the Framework?

The draft Framework is deliberately designed to cater for the 250 or more Aboriginal languages and Torres Strait Islander languages of Australia, irrespective of the ecology of each language,

whether it is currently used for everyday communication, or being revitalised, or one of the many creole languages that have arisen through language contact in Australia.

The draft Framework provides both important guidance and necessary flexibility for the development of language-specific programs for any Aboriginal language or Torres Strait Islander language.

The Framework has three pathways which take account of both 'the learner' and 'the nature of the language'. The pathways are:

- First Language Learner Pathway (L1)
- Language Revival Learner Pathway (LR)
- Second Language Learner Pathway (L2)

The Framework provides essential principles and protocols for consulting with relevant Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander communities when developing and delivering languages learning programs in schools.

What is the structure of the draft Framework?

The content of the draft Framework is organised by the two interrelated strands of the Australian Curriculum: Languages:

Communicating - using language for communicative purposes in interpreting, creating, and exchanging meaning; and

Understanding - examining language and culture as resources for interpreting and making meaning in intercultural exchange.

Each strand is comprised of content descriptions and elaborations which aim to ensure that students develop the skills, knowledge, and understanding required to communicate in the target language, to understand language and culture and develop an intercultural capability in communication.

Achievement standards describe what students are expected to achieve by the end of a given level.



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The draft Framework's content and achievement standards are organised in bands of year levels for each sequence of learning:

- Foundation–Year 6 (Level 1)
- Years 7–10 (Level 2)

While separate content is described for Foundation to Year 2 and for Years 3-6, a single achievement standard (Level 1) is designed to capture the Foundation to Year 6 sequence of learning and describes typical achievement towards the end of the primary years.

The curriculum structure provides flexibility for schools to make program arrangements best suited to their local context and needs.

What curricula and research was drawn upon to develop the draft Framework?

The draft Framework is the first national curriculum document for Foundation to Year 10 that supports the teaching and learning of the languages indigenous to this country. It takes account of current approaches to teaching Aboriginal Languages and Torres Strait Islander Languages in each state and territory, and it draws particularly on the landmark *Australian Indigenous Languages Framework* (Senior Secondary Assessment Board of South Australia, 1996).

ACARA has developed the draft Framework in close consultation with expert Aboriginal languages and Torres Strait Islander languages advisory groups.

A full range of references used in developing the Australian Curriculum: Languages can be found in the *Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Languages*.

Indicative hours for the draft Framework

The draft Framework has been developed based on an indicative allocation of hours. These indicative hours represent an assumption about time on task made only for the purposes of curriculum development. ACARA provided an indicative time allocation of 350 hours for F-6 and a further 320 for

Years 7-10 as a guide for writers in developing the draft Framework.

The provision of indicative hours is not designed to establish time allocations or sequences of learning. Schools and authorities will make policy decisions regarding these matters when developing and implementing language-specific curricula.

What is the timeline for development and implementation?

The draft Framework will be available online for national consultation until 25 July 2013. Online consultation will be supplemented through a series of face-to-face meetings to ensure feedback is gathered from community members and educators in 18 key sites across the country.

Feedback received during consultation will inform revisions before the final Framework is submitted to Ministers for endorsement. It is anticipated that the final Framework will be considered for approval and published in early 2014.

Decisions about the development of language-specific curricula based on the Framework, as well as implementation timelines, are the responsibility of state and territory education authorities and will vary based on local circumstances and appropriate consultations with relevant Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander communities.