

STATEMENTS IN RELATION TO LANGUAGES

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This is an important moment for language education in Australia. The extent and depth of consultation has been impressive and the result represents an important milestone in normalising language education for all Australian children, struggling and well-off, rural and urban, boys and girls, and for those who have English at home just as much as for those who encounter English at school. There are many purposes for learning languages which the Australian Curriculum admirably recognises by offering a rich and broad range to motivate student interest and benefit our country.

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I am delighted to see the Australian Government's and ACARA's commitment to developing curricula in specific languages as part of the Australian Curriculum. It represents important support for linguistic and cultural diversity. These curricula will provide teachers with clearer indications about expectations in terms of the content of language learning and student achievements in the diverse languages offered in Australian schools than the generic frameworks that they have been using to date. This means that they will be able to work more effectively to support students' experiences of using languages in a range of contexts and to extend students' communicative repertoires as an integral part of their learning.

The contemporary intercultural orientation of these curricula for specific languages will change the way that students engage with language learning. There is a much greater emphasis on the experience of communication in the context of diversity, understanding ways of communicating in intercultural exchange and the importance and value of reflecting on the process of communication, on the self and on others in intercultural exchange. It is in this way that students develop the capability for sophisticated communication which is so necessary in contemporary times.

Australian Federation of Modern Language Teachers Associations (AFMLTA)

The diversity of Australia's population and its engagement in both local and global contexts where multiple languages are essential are compelling reasons for all Australian students to have access to quality languages curricula. Not only will learning a language assist students in the future, but, as is clear from the research, it will have a direct positive impact on their wider cognitive skills and success as a student.
