

Attitudes Towards the Study of Languages in Australian Schools

The National Statement and Plan - making a difference or another decade of indifference?

A report for the Australian Council of State School Organisations and the
Australian Parents Council based on research conducted by Solved at
McConchie Pty Ltd

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Executive Summary

“Learning a language in Australia should be seen like learning Maths or English, kicking a ball at recess time or eating lunch - it is a normal part of the curriculum in which every student should participate. It is part of an education for life.”¹

Sadly, for many students in many Australian schools learning a language is not a normal part of the curriculum as envisaged by this South Australian teacher. The sub-title of this report is deliberately provocative – will the National and Statement and Plan be acted upon to make a difference to the state of language education in Australian schools; or will the next decade parallel the history of the last, when the momentum for change in relation to languages was gradually lost only to be replaced by an indifferent political and educational leadership and a generally apathetic public?

“I think that in general, Australians think of educating their children for local, not global capacities.”²

Language has been the Key Learning Area that has been politically easy to ignore. Languages have slipped off the education agenda over the last decade, and public debate has been virtually non-existent. No political party has sought votes for language education in the same way that other educational topics have been thrust into the spotlight from time to time. If anything, the present Federal government rhetoric has turned Australians more inward, through a focus on “Australian values and culture”, the primacy of learning English and emphasising the assimilation of new arrivals as opposed to the ideals of multiculturalism. And the States, which have the fundamental responsibility for education in Australia, are just as complicit. They too have allowed languages to languish.

The National Statement and Plan for Languages Education in Australian Schools represents another restart of the languages debate. If it was the first time that languages education had been placed on the agenda for priority action, it surely would have been met with considerable enthusiasm. However, a study of the recent history of this curriculum area reveals that languages education has been on a stop start pathway since the 1980’s. Aspirations and targets have not been matched by the resources to deliver quality programs. Reports such as Language Teachers: The Pivot of Policy³ reported that language teaching in Australia was hobbled by a shortage of qualified languages teachers. Eleven years on, this situation still exists.

¹ Teacher, SA

² Tertiary Language Teacher, Victoria

³ Language Teachers: The Pivot of Policy. NBEET. 1996

The National Statement for Languages Education in Australian Schools ('the Statement') reads well, providing an excellent rationale for the reasons why languages should be taught in schools. It is a document which should be supported by all who are interested in making Australia a country that can genuinely take its place on the international stage. In essence, it provides a strong argument that educational jurisdictions should be promoting and extending the reach of language education. In releasing this document, Education Ministers are to be commended, but they have set themselves a considerable challenge. That challenge is to attach appropriate funding and high level strategies to match the ideals and intent of the document.

The Statement provides a strong foundation on which to base an implementation plan that realises the aspirations contained in the document. Unfortunately the accompanying National Plan for Languages Education in Australian Schools 2005-2008 ('the Plan') cannot in any way be regarded as a plan which implements the Statement. It is a timid document which steps around the periphery of a major weakness in Australian education. On analysis it has no priorities and no funding commitments attached to it. At best the Plan provides a basis for the allocation of project money designed to facilitate further research, information gathering and perhaps a public relations exercise. At worst it will do nothing to convince stakeholders that MCEETYA is serious about making the Statement one of reality.

In fact the MCEETYA response to languages education highlights the discontinuity between political vision and political will. The National Statement is indeed a visionary, aspirational statement, and as such is of significant value in progressing the goal of improving school languages education. On the other hand, the National Plan represents an accurate manifestation of current political will, which falls well short of the aspirations contained in the Statement. Political will is best judged by examining strategies and funding allocations. Using these criteria, there can be little confidence that the current Plan, which is an aggregation of small scale projects, will result in any major improvement to this curriculum area.

Following the release of this report in draft form, the Group of Eight Universities launched a paper titled "Languages in Crisis"⁴, and called a summit meeting of interested parties in Canberra. The Go8 view is entirely in accord with the findings of this report. If one is to accept that there is a crisis in languages education, then one cannot accept mild, cautious solutions as the means to address the crisis. Language education needs a bold, high level intervention - it needs transformational leadership - it needs a circuit breaker to arrest the continuing downward spiral of quality language provision.

Consequently this study believes that for the Statement to have credibility, it must be supported by a fully funded National Implementation Plan for

⁴ Languages in Crisis – A rescue plan for Australia; Group of Eight, June 2007

Languages Education in Australian Schools 2009 – 2012 which replaces the current plan on its expiry in 2008. In the event that such a plan is not produced, this study recommends that the only honest approach is for MCEETYA to formally withdraw the National Statement, on the grounds that it provides the community with expectations that are both unrealistic and unachievable.

This research finds that there is strong support for languages education from those people who participated in the study. However all groups said that Australian society, and within it, the parents of Australian school-children, were in general apathetic towards languages education. The study also found that a significant number of school communities reflected the same national apathy.

Whilst many of the findings of this study are not at all surprising, they are important as they bring together the views of six stakeholder groups. In this respect, the study is unique, as it introduces a broad perspective into the debate. The main findings include:

- Governments need to exercise leadership through giving clear messages of support for language education, not mixing the messages with words and actions that detract from the intent of the National Statement and Plan.
- There are simply too few qualified language teachers to guarantee access to quality programs. More language teachers need to be trained. There should be incentive programs to recruit and retain language teachers in our schools.
- There is an appalling disconnect between the levels of schooling that affects the smooth transition of students. This needs to be addressed as a priority.
- The purpose of language education is not clearly articulated, judging by the range of programs that are regarded as acceptable by authorities. The nature of inter-cultural language learning is not clear to the public or to practitioners.
- Existing systemic syllabuses or teaching guidelines are at best unhelpful and at worst non-existent for language education in many primary schools.
- Incentives for schools to offer, and for students to study languages need to be introduced.
- Too little time is allocated by schools to language learning and the way that time is arranged often affects the continuity of study.
- In many primary schools, language teachers provide the release time for mainstream teachers. This practice is counter-productive to run effective language programs, and needs to be addressed.
- Language teachers often work in isolation, and need greater access to professional development and networking opportunities.

- Language teachers need classrooms to call their own.
- There is a disconnect between universities, schools and school systems which works against good planning and other aspects of languages education.
- A concerted campaign to promote language education is required. A part of this campaign should involve professional learning programs for school leadership teams, careers advisors and other classroom teachers to improve the level of whole school support.
- Parent organisations have a role to play in improving the status of languages in the eyes of the community.
- The national Plan should make explicit an expectation that parents have a role to play in the implementation of the Plan.
- Education jurisdictions and authorities should audit their current policies and operational practices and abandon any that work in opposition to the intent of the Statement and Plan.

The study concludes that despite the picture of systemic neglect that emerges in this study, there are many examples of good practice and sufficient community and professional support on which MCEETYA can build in implementing its vision, as expressed in the National Statement.

List of recommendations

Recommendation 1

Education Ministers should attempt to align their respective government policies and public statements in related portfolios with the intent of the National Statement and Plan so that there can be no ambiguity in relation to the strength of their government's commitment towards the value of learning languages in schools.

Recommendation 2

For the Statement to have credibility, it must be supported by a fully funded National Implementation Plan for Languages Education in Australian Schools 2009 – 2012 which replaces the current Plan on its expiry in 2008. In the event that such a plan is not produced, this study recommends that MCEETYA formally withdraw the National Statement on the grounds that it provides the Australian community with unrealistic expectations of governments.

Recommendation 3

The correlation between literacy in English and learning other languages needs to be made explicit. Language teachers and English teachers should ensure that the pedagogy used in English is consistent with, or at least overlaps with, the pedagogies used in languages classes.

Recommendation 4

The low morale of language teachers needs to be acknowledged and steps should be taken at to address this at national, state, regional and school levels where appropriate. A designated "Year of Languages Education" as flagged in the Plan would go some way towards addressing this issue, as would the identification and implementation of a range of employment incentives directed towards supporting these teachers.

Recommendation 5

Each jurisdiction needs to audit the effectiveness of its regional planning and provision in schools and establish an action plan to address deficiencies.

Recommendation 6

MCEETYA needs to prioritise the actions in the Plan, avoiding those pseudo actions where further research is not required. Jurisdictions should direct their funding to these priority areas.

Recommendation 7

Reducing the extent of compulsion would send wrong messages about the value of languages education. It is recommended that schools and jurisdictions maintain the current levels of compulsion, and work on increasing the quality of provision.

Recommendation 8

Jurisdictions and schools should not reduce the number of languages that are currently taught. They should consider increasing the range in individual schools to provide students with greater choices, particularly in the junior high school years.

Recommendation 9

Education jurisdictions should publish information about language teaching and learning electronically, and share this information with other jurisdictions and schools across state borders and between government and non-government schooling sectors.

Recommendation 10

Inter-cultural language learning needs to be clearly defined and steps should be taken to inform all stakeholders just what is and what is not legitimate to be included in this approach. Jurisdictions and schools should assist languages teachers by clarifying curriculum documentation and producing sample courses (including resource lists) for teachers to follow.

Recommendation 11

Jurisdictions and schools should look for creative ways to abandon the model whereby language teachers provide release time for other teachers in primary schools, as this practice places major constraints in implementing an integrated approach to languages education at this level.

Recommendation 12

Wherever possible, schools should make concerted efforts to provide languages teachers with their own dedicated classrooms.

Recommendation 13

Authorities/schools should examine their timetabling practices and establish alternative models for schools to follow that do not discriminate against languages learning. Such an examination would include looking at issues that affect the continuity of language learning, the frequency of lessons and competition from other subject areas. Plans should be developed to gradually increase the time allocated to languages lessons in those schools where the time allocation is judged to be inadequate.

Recommendation 14

Each jurisdiction needs to audit the effectiveness of the primary to secondary transition in every cluster of schools and establish an action plan to address deficiencies.

Recommendation 15

Jurisdictions and schools should allocate extra staffing resources to avoid situations where grouping students who are at very different levels of proficiency disadvantages both groups.

Recommendation 16

Curriculum authorities should examine senior secondary course provision to ensure that courses which differentially target native speakers and non-native speakers are available through to Year 12. The level of difficulty of Year 12 courses and assessment should be re-assessed.

Recommendation 17

Schools and education authorities should establish policies of providing incentives directed towards boosting the attractiveness of learning languages through to the end of Year 12, and back up these policies with appropriate funding.

Recommendation 18

As resources permit, schools and education authorities should commence introducing languages education into first two years of primary school.

Recommendation 19

Schools and jurisdictions should work on making the links between learning languages and the increased career options which are available for young people who have language expertise. Careers advisors need to be made aware of these opportunities.

Recommendation 20

Schools and jurisdictions should consider the requirements of language classes and classrooms when planning ICT infrastructure provision in schools.

Recommendation 21

Relevant authorities should establish an action plan that produces significant yearly increases in the numbers of language teachers in training, commencing immediately. Baseline data for the number of language teachers currently in training should be established, and each year from 2008 onwards the number of teachers in training be compared with the baseline data. This data should be published widely on an annual basis.

Recommendation 22

Relevant employing authorities should establish a suite of employment related changes and incentives designed to recruit language teachers to the teaching profession and to retain them once they have been recruited. A pool of incentive funding needs to be established to support such a policy.

Recommendation 23

Education authorities and universities need to establish structures whereby they work together to evaluate the success of existing language courses and to design new ones that support the intent of the National Statement, including re-training of classroom teachers.

Recommendation 24

Education departments and employing authorities should address concerns about the nature and availability of teacher professional development as a matter of urgency. Similarly, the development of learning programs for school leaders on the value of languages should commence in the context of promoting the National Statement.

Recommendation 25

Schools should be assisted to audit their current practice in languages education against the principles embodied in good practice. They should identify shortfalls in their own operations and develop individual action plans to address such shortfalls.

Recommendation 26

Examples of good practice should be collected from schools and jurisdictions nationally, ensuring a range of diversity. Case studies should be written up in plain English, published and disseminated to every school in the country. This initial process should then be followed up with a national roll out of professional development for school communities to discuss the research. The outcome would be the establishment of statewide or regional planning teams to re-structure school language programs along best practice lines.

Recommendation 27

Each education jurisdiction should identify and publicly acknowledge those policies and practices that run counter to the intent of the National Plan, and report back to MCEETYA outlining the steps that the jurisdiction is taking to eliminate or change those policies and practices, including milestones and a timetable of expected completion.

Recommendation 28

That MCEETYA support a nationwide media campaign to promote the value of languages education. This campaign should utilise the services of experienced and innovative marketing organisations, and have national, state and local elements.

Recommendation 29

The Plan should be adjusted to acknowledge and incorporate a significant level of parental involvement taking into account the fact that parents are significant stakeholders in the entire exercise of planning for change. Parental involvement should also be incorporated into any revised or new implementation plan that is produced.

About this research

In 2006, the Australian Council of State School Organisations, in conjunction with the Australian Parents Council, commissioned a research project to investigate the attitudes held towards the study of languages in Australian schools by parents, students, language teachers, principals, language advisors in education authorities and tertiary language educators.

Whilst this research does not form part of the DEST funded Languages in Schools Program, it aims to inform elements of that program, as well as the on-going implementation of the MCEETYA National Statement and Plan for Languages in Australian Schools, 2005 – 2008 (the Plan).

Support for languages education is strongly advocated by both parent groups, who believe that quality school language programs are essential if Australians are to play a role on the world stage - economically, socially and culturally. Parents want to assist in the implementation of the Plan. Both ACSSO and the APC look forward to being involved as the Plan is further discussed, refined and hopefully rolled out.

The main instrument utilised in this research was a web based electronic survey, with sections tailored for each stakeholder group. Respondents were provided with some 50-60 propositions. Responses were invited on a 5 point Likert scale, ranging from Strongly Agree through to Strongly Disagree. A sixth option (Don't Know) was provided for those people who had insufficient knowledge of an issue to provide a meaningful response. The survey was administered in September - November 2006, and forms the basis of this report. Participant data is summarised in Table 1.

	ACT	NSW	NT	Qld	SA	Tas	Vic	WA	Total	% of total
Parents	76	100	6	155	40	46	113	99	635	19.4%
Students	31	154	2	124	123	91	231	217	973	29.7%
Languages teachers	26	246	14	237	120	42	345	153	1183	36.1%
Principals	11	44	7	39	30	9	82	46	268	8.2%
Language Advisors	3	11	2	34	8	6	20	11	95	2.9%
Tert Lang Teachers	4	36	0	31	8	8	27	6	120	3.7%
Total	151	591	31	620	329	202	818	532	3274	100%
% of total	4.6%	18.1%	0.9%	18.9%	10.0%	6.2%	25.0%	16.3%	100%	

Table 1

3274 responses were received, from all states and territories. Responses from the government and non-government sectors were roughly in proportion to the numbers of schools in each sector.

All the questions and response data, except for the written responses, are included in Appendix 1.

An optional, open ended free response section was included for those people who wanted to provide additional information or explanation. These open-ended, unstructured responses provided valuable supplementary data.

The responses were sorted by State and by stakeholder group. Contact details were edited out for privacy reasons, as were the identity of schools where strong negative comments were made. Where teachers were named by students, names were removed, although some of the comments themselves were included. Several comments contained expletives, and these have been omitted. Typographical errors have been largely corrected in the published version.

Although the free response section was optional, a significant number of parents and languages teachers did take the opportunity to add a comment. Some made very lengthy submissions. A large number of people left contact details only, expressing a willingness to provide extra comment either via email or telephone if required. To date these people have not been called upon for extra information. As can be read in the comment documents, many people expressed their appreciation to ACSSO for sponsoring the study and for the opportunity to provide input to what they see as an important issue for Australian education.

Note also that people self-selected the section of the survey that they chose to answer. It was evident that some people were both language teachers and parents. In an anonymous web based survey of this nature it was also possible for a member of one group to act as an “imposter”, by completing another section of the survey. This was only evident in one case, where it would seem that a student accessed the Principal’s survey, and added some comments – these of course were disregarded.

Written responses grouped according to State/Territory, and by stakeholder group are included in Appendices 2 -9.

Table 2 provides data on the number of written responses:

	ACT	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	Total
Parents	39	57	3	71	21	19	57	57	324
Students	10	53	0	57	23	38	55	53	289
Lang. Teachers	15	69	5	104	63	23	141	69	489
Principals	6	26	2	17	11	5	39	26	132
Lang. Advisors	1	4	2	12	5	4	6	4	38
Tert. Lang Teachers	2	3	0	14	2	2	9	3	35
Total	73	212	12	275	125	91	307	212	1307

Table 2

About this report

This report is structured around the National Statement for Languages Education and the National Plan for Languages Education in Australian Schools⁵. The Statement and Plan are reproduced in their entirety in this report, being interposed throughout. Part 1 relates to the National Statement, whilst Part 2 relates to the National Plan.

This research concerns languages education in mainstream government and non-government primary and secondary schools. It did not attempt to collect data on views relating to community language schools or to indigenous languages. It was decided at the outset that these specific areas were worthy of further research in their own right, and that adding these extra layers of complexity into the research would not yield particularly meaningful results given the structure and the methodology employed. Indeed, two projects are being funded by DEST on community and indigenous languages.

Where the study collected data on any aspect of the Statement and Plan, it is inserted adjacent to the relevant section which appears in grey panels. Recommendations appear in both Parts 1 and 2 of the report, mainly at the end of sections.

Two types of table are included in the report. The first summarises the quantitative data, and the second the frequency of particular responses gleaned from the open-ended responses. The quantitative responses are coded as follows:

Pa = Parent St = Student LT = Language Teacher P = Principal LA = Language Advisor TL = Tertiary Language Educator

The numbers in each column represent the aggregated percentage of responses that fell in the “Strongly Agree” and “Agree” categories, rounded to the closest whole number. A full listing of questions and all responses can be seen in Appendix 1.

Note that for the purposes of this summary “Don’t Know” and “Neutral” responses have been ignored. Tertiary Language educators in particular used the “Don’t Know” response in relation to a number of school based issues. Similarly parents and students used this response for some issues that were beyond their immediate experience.

Caution needs to be taken in trying to interpret the data too finely. Whilst data was collected from each participant group in each State and Territory

⁵ National statement for languages education in Australian schools: national plan for languages education in Australian schools 2005 – 2008. MCEETYA. 2005

and in each education sector, scrutiny of this data reveals that the sample numbers become too small to reach meaningful conclusions about the views of sub-groups. It is more realistic to confine any interpretations and conclusions to participant groups as a whole, not their location or other sub-grouping. Consequently, this fine data has not been included in the Appendix.

Caution should also be exercised when attempting to interpret student responses. Students ranged from Year 5 through to Year 12, so the spread in maturity was extremely broad. It cannot be claimed that the student responses in any way represented a proper statistical sample, but despite this it is possible to identify some common trends in their thinking about languages, especially on issues of engagement and choice.

Similarly, the open ended responses are taken at face value, and any particular individual viewpoint is subjective. The research did not have the resources to check the validity of the written responses, although it does report on patterns and trends by counting the frequency of particular issues raised by participants. As this section of the survey was “unprompted”, it is reasonable to assume that where participants raised similar issues, then the issue in question was real rather than idiosyncratic.

The first draft of this report was placed on the ACSSO languages website. Copies were sent to all Ministers of Education and government and non-government jurisdictions and authorities, as well to selected professional associations and individuals. Interested parties were invited to comment on the report as part of a validation exercise. These responses are published in Appendix 3.

Part 1: Implications for the National Statement for Languages Education in Australian Schools

Purpose and nature of languages education

Purpose and nature of languages education

Ministers of Education are committed to the vision of quality languages education for all students, in all schools, in all parts of the country. We believe that through learning languages our students and the broader Australian community gain important benefits.

Need for consistent messages

It is pleasing that Ministers of Education are committed to quality languages education, and are united in this quest. Consensus at this level is an important step in any ambitious education plan. Unfortunately this research indicates that their vision is not reflected in all of the words or actions of Federal and State governments when taken collectively, nor is it reflected in the operational leadership within all education authorities.

Whilst a majority of the parents who completed the survey were supportive of school languages programs, they also said that our society and culture generally provided a negative environment for languages to operate. Governments compound society's apathy in both intended and unintended ways. Removal of the NALSAS funding was cited as an example of a negative action, whilst the current Federal government rhetoric about Australian values, the importance of learning English, the attack on multiculturalism, the focus on Australian history along with the basics and standardised testing all give comfort to those who are apathetic or oppose languages education. This is not to argue or question these policies, except to say that when there is a perceived concurrent silence in relation to languages, it is easy for people to conclude that languages are not really on the governmental agenda in any serious way.

It is therefore entirely reasonable to suggest that the global messages that the public receives about language learning from governments are at best, mixed.

Recommendation 1

Education Ministers should attempt to align their respective government policies and public statements in related portfolios with the intent of the National Statement and Plan so that there can be no ambiguity in relation to the strength of their government's commitment towards the value of learning languages in schools.

Stakeholder confidence in governments

Further, the study finds that there is limited confidence in the commitment of education authorities to provide the necessary leadership to support quality language programs, as shown in Table 3 below. This table also shows that people believe that languages do not hold a strong position in the curriculums of the various jurisdictions.

Co-ordination, planning and leadership issues	Pa %	St %	LT %	P %	LA %	TL %
The Education Department/Office in my state/territory provides strong leadership and commitment to Language education programs	14	NA	33	29	35	15
Language teaching holds a strong position in my State/Territory curriculum	23	NA	28	50	16	12

Table 3

It is likely that the lack of confidence in relevant governments and authorities to actually make a difference to this curriculum area is compounded by the fact that languages education has been the subject of a number of studies and reports over the last decade, and there is little to show for the efforts made. For example, the Australian Language and Literacy Council in 1996 highlighted the continuing failure of education systems to deliver quality outcomes.

“The Council believes that achieving proficiency in other languages is one of the great learning experiences in the human condition. The key finding of the Council’s investigation is that our education systems are consistently failing to deliver any worthwhile proficiency in languages.”⁶

And again in 2002, the Review of the Commonwealth LOTE program argued for an immediate debate and in fact re-examination of the role that languages education should play in the future of our nation.

“What is imperative is a decision about how serious we, as a nation, are about becoming a truly multi-lingual society, and the extent to which governments will commit to changing the current situation. These considerations go way beyond deciding the future of the relatively modest funding provided by the Commonwealth government for the LOTE in Schools Programme. They involve a fundamental re-examination of who we are as a people, what we value, and what role we will play in the wider world in the coming decades. Given the lead time required for educational policy changes to produce changes in student outcomes, this debate needs to take place and be resolved sooner rather than later.”⁷

⁶ NBEET 19 April 1996 in letter of transmission of the report Language Teachers: The Pivot of Policy to Sen. Amanda Vanstone, Minister for Education, Employment and Youth Affairs.

⁷ Review of the Commonwealth LOTE Program, December 2002, pxxi

An analysis of the National Statement and Plan indicates that Ministers have at this stage stopped short of agreeing to any genuine, substantial action to revitalise this curriculum area. The following words are used throughout the “action” areas of the Plan – ‘consider’, ‘monitor’, ‘review’, ‘explore’, ‘identify’, ‘share’, and ‘promote’. Will the collection of more information make a difference to the current state of languages education? Will further research reveal a magic bullet? Further research may well be necessary, but surely there is plenty of evidence available already about the factors that are hindering languages education, and simply commissioning more research is in reality code for further procrastination. Allocating appropriate resources within the framework of a well developed change management strategy, is surely the first priority.

Table 4 below provides evidence that stakeholders have not yet developed confidence that the National Plan will deliver improved outcomes. An average of just under 10% of participants in this study believe that the MCEETYA Plan will receive sufficient funding to be fully implemented. The only way that this people will be convinced that State and Federal governments are serious in their intentions will be when they see real change happening as opposed to recycling and updating knowledge about problems which are already well known.

Knowledge about and support for the National Plan	Pa %	St %	LT %	P %	LA %	TL %
I am confident that the Commonwealth and the States will provide sufficient resources to fully implement the National Plan	8	NA	13	10	13	4

Table 4

Despite the lack of confidence in actual implementation, the rationale for learning languages as expressed in the National Statement was supported by a large number of written submissions received by as part of this research project. Participants in the study in their own words expressed many of the same sentiments as to the importance of languages education that are found in the MCEETYA statement.

The National Statement itself contains an elegant, clear and contemporary rationale for the value of learning languages. The National Plan however is a cautious, even timid document that steps around the periphery of the problem, looking mainly to gather even more information.

In fact the MCEETYA response to Languages Education highlights the discontinuity between political vision and political will. The National Statement is indeed a visionary, aspirational statement, and as such is of significant value in progressing the cause of improving school languages education. On the other hand, the National Plan represents an accurate manifestation of current political will, which falls well short of the aspirations contained in the Statement. Political will is best judged by examining the

significance of the strategies and the levels of funding allocated to drive these strategies. Using these criteria, there can be little confidence that the current Plan, which is an aggregation of small scale projects, will result in any major improvement to this curriculum area.

Following the release of this report in draft form, the Group of Eight Universities launched a paper titled “Languages in Crisis”, and called a summit meeting of interested parties in Canberra. The Go8 view is entirely in accord with the findings of this report. If one is to accept that there is a crisis in languages education, then one cannot accept mild, cautious solutions as the means to address the crisis. Language education needs a bold, high level intervention – it needs transformational leadership – it needs a circuit breaker to arrest the continuing downward spiral of quality language provision.

This study concludes that stakeholders will not embrace the National Statement in the absence of a fully resourced plan designed to implement a series of actions that fully address all the issues facing languages education. Unless MCEETYA produces such an implementation plan to replace the current one, the National Statement should be formally withdrawn, as it raises community expectations of governments which are clearly not intended to be met. Is it asking too much that political vision should be matched by political will, as measured by the quality of the strategies and resource levels that genuinely drive change? Is it asking too much of our political leaders to match high level rhetoric with in depth, long term, and fully resourced strategic planning?

Recommendation 2

For the Statement to have credibility, it must be supported by a fully funded National Implementation Plan for Languages Education in Australian Schools 2009 – 2012 which replaces the current Plan on its expiry in 2008. In the event that such a plan is not produced, this study recommends that the only honest approach is for the National Statement to be formally withdrawn.

Despite the high level of support for language education from most participants in this study, there was strong evidence that the general public is not “on board”, and in fact public support may have declined over the last decade. The public viewpoint will now be examined in greater detail.

The public view about the usefulness and relevance of languages

Table 5 summarises the findings related to how important the public views languages education. All groups, even the parents themselves agree that many other parents do not see the relevance of learning languages. Only 15% of parents believe that Australian people think that Languages form an important part of the school curriculum.

Usefulness and relevance of Languages	Pa %	St %	LT %	P %	LA %	TL %
Many Australian parents do not see the relevance of learning a Language	66	NA	76	75	84	67
Many Australian students think that learning a Language is not important	66	32	76	72	80	74
Australian people generally think that Languages are an important part of the school curriculum	15	26	24	32	22	19
Australians as a people do not seem very interested in learning other Languages	66	35	73	60	73	74

Table 5

A very common response from parents was that learning a language should be accorded a much lower priority than learning English.

*"A number of years ago at our local primary school the subject of LOTE came up in a P&F meeting. I was disturbed by the large number of parents who could see no value in LOTE and felt it was provided at the expense of 'literacy and numeracy'. I think the statement was some thing like - 'What's the point of the children learning another language if they can't read or write in English'"*⁸

Balancing this kind of comment however were a large number which stressed the importance of languages. The following teacher put it very succinctly:

*"Learning a language in Australia should be seen like learning Maths or English, kicking a ball at recess time or eating lunch - it is a normal part of the curriculum in which every student should participate. It is part of an education for life."*⁹

And a parent said:

*"For Australians (indeed anyone) to better appreciate and understand other people / nationalities, and to enhance their communication skills, a knowledge of other languages is critical. It doesn't really matter what other languages are learnt because my experience shows that just by simply knowing another language brings a new and positive dimension to communication and understanding of others, because the thought processes tend to be different to your native language."*¹⁰

However parents often see limited outcomes from the time that their children spend on languages in school:

"I feel learning about other countries entire cultures are more important for our children rather than just the language side of it. Bring back Social Studies as it was called in my years at school. Teach the children about the

⁸ Parent, Tasmania

⁹ Teacher, SA

¹⁰ Parent ACT

*history, leaders, economy etc of a different country each year. My son brings home origami every week from Japanese!"*¹¹

The next parent comment picked up on a number of common issues affecting language education, including those relating to its purpose, limited outcomes, lack of continuity, over-stretched teachers, limited school resources, no support for parents and the lack of status of the subject:

"I am generally dissatisfied with the teaching of Languages (Indonesian only) at my school:

- 1. We have one teacher who teaches over 600 pupils each week.*
- 2. As far as I know my children cannot continue the study of Indonesian at a local Catholic high school. There is thus little incentive for the children or parents to regard Indonesian as little more than 'something nice' to fill in part of the day.*
- 3. The emphasis seems to be on culture, songs, dance, food etc. with little evidence of grammar being learned and only basic vocabulary. My son in Year 5 seems to know not much more Indonesian than his brother in Year 3.*
- 3. When I ask them to give me a basic sentence in Indonesian they don't know how to work it out.*
- 4. No Indonesian home work is assigned.*
- 5. No Indonesian readers come home, nor are there many Indonesian language resources in the school library.*
- 6. There is no opportunity for parents who don't themselves know Indonesian to assist their children in learning the language."*¹²

Whilst the National Statement provides an excellent rationale for learning languages, it is far from being embedded widely in the Australian psyche.

¹¹ Parent, WA

¹² Parent, ACT

Learning languages:

- enriches our learners intellectually, educationally and culturally
- enables our learners to communicate across cultures
- contributes to social cohesiveness through better communication and understanding
- further develops the existing linguistic and cultural resources in our community
- contributes to our strategic, economic and international development
- enhances employment and career prospects for the individual.

Our learners are the future of our nation. Developing in them language skills and inter-cultural understanding is an investment in our national capability and a valuable resource. This was recognised in the 1989 National Goals for Schooling, and re-affirmed in the 1999 National Goals, where the Languages (Other Than English)¹ learning area was identified as one of the eight key learning areas, and one in which all learners are expected to attain high standards of knowledge, skills and understandings. This National Statement and National Plan for Languages Education in Australian Schools will further progress towards that goal.

We live in times of rapid change. Information and communication technologies are accelerating the movement of people and ideas across the globe and expanding the range of communities in which people operate. Twenty-first century education needs to engage with, and be responsive to, this changing world. It needs to develop in learners the knowledge, understanding and attributes necessary for successful participation and engagement within and across local, regional and global communities, and in all spheres of activity.

English is Australia's national language. It is also growing as an international language of communication. But English alone is not enough for our learners. In our increasingly multi lingual world, more people speak two languages than one, and contact with speakers of other languages is rapidly growing. Australia must build on its diverse linguistic and cultural environment which is a result of its Indigenous history, geography and migration. Australian Indigenous Languages, the languages of Australia's original inhabitants, are the nation's first languages. There are many active Australian Indigenous languages, dialects, creoles, pidgins and Aboriginal English dialects spoken in Australia. Their importance to Australian Indigenous people and to the broader community is acknowledged and valued. In addition, migration by people from across the globe has brought with it English and more than 150 additional languages. This is Australia's linguistic and cultural landscape. It is a valuable base from which to develop the linguistic capabilities necessary for Australia to be successful in the international community of the 21st century.

Education in a global community brings with it an increasing need to focus on developing inter-cultural understanding. This involves the integration of language, culture and learning. Inter-cultural language learning helps learners to know and understand the world around them, and to understand commonality and difference, global connections and patterns. Learners will view the world, not from a single perspective of their own first language and culture, but from the multiple perspectives gained through the study of second and subsequent languages and cultures. For learners who study their background or heritage language, it provides a strengthened sense of identity. Inter-cultural language learning contributes to the overall education of learners, developing in them the capabilities to:

- communicate, interact and negotiate within and across languages and cultures
- understand their own and others' languages, thus extending their range of literacy skills, including skills in English literacy
- understand themselves and others, and to understand and use diverse ways of knowing, being and doing
- further develop their cognitive skills through thinking critically and analytically, solving problems, and making connections in their learning.

Such capabilities assist learners to live and work successfully as linguistically and culturally aware citizens of the world.

The marginalisation of languages

This study supports the findings of the 2003 Review in relation to a number of unaddressed challenges. Commenting on the Review, Lo Bianco states that the increased levels of activity aimed at making Australia a more bilingual nation starting in the 1980's had run out of steam by 2005.

“However, the momentum to make this [provision of universal mainstream language programs] happen, now appears to have stalled and public consensus is eroding. The sad prospect is that languages will again be marginalised in secondary education and become a personal aspiration for individuals, a nostalgic devotion of first generation immigrants, an eroding practice for remote indigenous communities, and a procurement operation for specialist policy sectors, such as national defence planning and the training of diplomats.”¹³

This study confirms Lo Bianco's assertion that 'public consensus is eroding.' Whilst the majority of people surveyed, including parents, support languages education, they also said that they believed that the public as a whole was not convinced of its value. A number of language teachers said that other teachers in their schools are also reflective of an unsupportive community viewpoint. All groups believed that school principals play a crucial role, however there was evidence that the actual support for languages from principals was variable.

This research also supports the findings of the 2002 Review¹⁴ which identified a number of unaddressed challenges. Language programs have expanded, but this expansion has not been underwritten by appropriate resourcing and policy considerations, at the local, state and federal levels. Nor has there been up to this point a plan to address the complex set of societal and attitudinal factors which combine to constrain this curriculum area.

“The mediocre state of language learning in this country is not from lack of effort or money being spent. The reality is much more complex, and we would not pretend that there is a simple solution to resolving the intricate interplay between a variety of social, cultural, economic and political forces. The current situation in Australia has taken many years to develop, and is thus likely to take many years to change.”¹⁵

Why are languages languishing? – a hypothesis

There has been no public debate about languages in recent years. Languages has been overshadowed by other recent government educational initiatives, including values, history, literacy, numeracy, benchmark testing, reporting to

¹³ Lo Bianco. Asian Languages in Australian Schools: Policy Options. Melbourne Asia Policy Papers, No.7. May 2005

¹⁴ Review of the Commonwealth LOTE programme. Erebus Consulting Partners. December 2002

¹⁵ *ibid.* Pp xiii

parents, common school starting ages, a new Year 12 certificate, common curriculum, safe schools and so on. One cannot deny that education has been an active area of policy development, but like the crowded school curriculum, not every subject gets the attention it deserves. Languages suffered at the MCEETYA table following the change of Federal government in 1996, up to around 2005 when it was finally resurrected as a priority once more.

At a broader political level, the rhetoric around citizenship, Australian values, the importance of English as Australia’s national language, migrant integration and the downgrading of multi-culturalism has taken the spotlight away from languages education. It comes as no surprise that many in the population think that learning English is sufficient for the children of today. But not all share this view. According to a Queensland language teacher;

“Australia is a multicultural country and therefore a multilingual country. Current attempts by both major parties to stress the importance of English for citizenship purposes ignores the fact that Australia is both multicultural and multilingual and that Australia cannot hope to maintain good intercultural relations with other countries unless it respects those countries enough to communicate in languages other than English as well as fostering intercultural sensibility.”¹⁶

The above quote exactly encapsulates the intent of the National Statement and why it should be implemented.

Inter-cultural language learning

The focus on the benefits of inter-cultural language learning is essentially a statement of purpose, or hope, rather than one of current reality. Approximately 27% of languages teachers agreed with the proposition that they had difficulty with the concept of inter-cultural language learning. Another 18% expressed neutrality on the issue, indicating that only 55% were fully comfortable with this philosophy. In relation to a broader understanding of the term, educators believed that parents probably did not understand this terminology, and this was confirmed by the parents themselves.

Parent and student involvement in Languages education	Pa %	St %	LT %	P %	LA %	TL %
The term “intercultural language learning” has little meaning for me	47	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
The term “intercultural language learning” is probably not well understood by parents	NA	NA	90	91	90	87

Table 6

These responses serve to remind educators that care must be exercised in using terms such as these when communicating with parents, unless they are carefully explained first. Technical or jargon rich language can be used to

¹⁶ Tertiary language teacher, Queensland

marginalise parents from playing a supportive role in their children's education, and even more so in this area, as many parents will have few language skills themselves..

But more importantly, intercultural language learning actually involves learning a language, and through it, cultural understandings. The reality is however that in many primary schools, language takes a back seat to culture, and parents rightly ask why the cultural aspects cannot simply be taught as part of the Studies of Society and Environment (SOSE) programs. This question has more weight when they see very limited language skill outcomes from their children's language lessons.

*"My daughter's school provides at best 30 minutes a week of LOTE, as the hour is shared with Art. At times it appears that the whole session is taken up with Art rather than Language learning. In Year 3 her language learning is limited to single word or vocabulary responses and is unable to communicate even in a simple sentence. I would have expected some simple conversation skills after three years of language learning."*¹⁷

Usefulness and relevance of Languages	Pa %	St %	LT %	P %	LA %	TL %
The best way to learn about another culture is through learning a Language	63	59	89	59	74	92

Table 7

Table 7 shows that language teachers have much more confidence than parents, students and principals in the role of languages as a vehicle for teaching about different cultures.

A recommendation concerning intercultural language learning is included in Part 2 of this report when the topic is revisited.

The relationship between languages and English

The relationship between learning English and learning other languages is an area where there is little consensus. Whilst the National Statement argues that literacy skills in English will be enhanced through learning other languages, many parents are yet to be convinced. This does not mean that they are right; it simply means that they have not established this relationship in their own minds.

Usefulness and relevance of Languages	Pa %	St %	LT %	P %	LA %	TL %
Learning other languages is not particularly useful, because English is now spoken so widely around the world	56	17	NA	12	NA	NA
Learning a Language helps with learning English	65	40	97	75	84	84

Table 8

¹⁷ Parent, Victoria

Whilst 65% of parents said that learning a language assists with learning English, 56% also agreed with the proposition that a proficiency in English was sufficient. When taken with the written comments where a significant number of parents took the view that languages should be taught only if students were first competent in English, it would appear that large numbers of parents fail to see a link between the two. It should also be noted that only 40% students saw the link between learning English and other languages.

*“I think there is a problem with Languages in that their links to Literacy and how they help improve the Literacy skills of students is not understood and recognised”.*¹⁸

So whilst 97% of Languages teachers say that learning a language helps with learning English, are they making the necessary classroom links? Can they make the links? Or are they teaching something which is fundamentally different from the way English is currently taught and the links are heavily disguised?

Pursuing this line a little further, a number of respondents argued that the study of languages would be made easier if English was taught in a more formal way – grammar, spelling, sentence construction and so on. Others said that when a language is taught formally, students are exposed to valuable literacy learning because this is not available in English classes! This begs the obvious question – is there a mismatch between the pedagogy of teaching English and that of teaching other languages? Perhaps the parents are half right when they say that English should be taught first? Can students be expected to learn the structure of other languages when their own remains a mystery to them?

This report is aware that a NALSAS funded project¹⁹ explored the links between language learning and English literacy. A pamphlet was published outlining these benefits. If this project was a genuine strategy to share the information with the general public, in a convincing way, it is clear that much more needs to be done. The issue of a public education campaign to promote the benefits of learning languages will be explored later in this report.

Recommendation 3

The correlation between literacy in English and learning other languages needs to be made explicit. Language teachers and English teachers should ensure that the pedagogy used in English is consistent with, or at least overlaps with, the pedagogies used in languages classes.

¹⁸ Teacher, Qld

¹⁹ A Literature Search and Analysis of the Benefits of Learning a Languages Other than English to Literacy Development in English, a report prepared by Simpson Norris International in conjunction with the Centre for Learning, Change and Development, Murdoch University, for the Department of Education, Science and Training, 2002

How to ramp up languages nationally?

National developments

Quality languages education is not yet part of the learning experience of all students, in all schools, in all parts of the country. The challenge that must now be addressed is how best to further integrate quality languages education into the mainstream curriculum, and into program delivery by all schools.

A real commitment to languages is necessary

The statement that “quality languages education is not yet part of the learning experience of all students, in all schools, in all parts of the country” is strongly supported by this research. A number of the factors working against this aim were identified. Many of these factors have not changed over the last decade, and are likely to have been evident over a much longer period of time. This is not to say that there are not some bright spots on the languages landscape. Language education in some schools, in both government and non-government sectors, works very well, enjoying strong support from entire school communities. Unfortunately, the lessons learned from these bright spots, if they have been learned, have not been translated or applied more broadly. The reason for this is open to conjecture. If governments have the will, resources can be found and plans can be enacted. Despite the Ministers’ statement prefacing the National Statement and Plan, it would appear that governments over the past decade have simply not developed a level of commitment that is necessary to drive any worthwhile change in this curriculum area.

National level strategies	Frequency
Develop a national/state government commitment to languages, multilingual multicultural society (from top, PM down)	42

Table 9

Table 9 indicates that the study received 42 written comments suggesting that the very first step necessary to drive change was to obtain top level commitment, including that of the Prime Minister, in relation to supporting the teaching of languages within a framework of the needs of the nation and its people. Tangible evidence of a real commitment would be if recommendation 1 was actually implemented.

Languages education for all students is a relatively new concept in the history of Australian schooling. While the study of languages has long been an established part of the curriculum in many secondary schools, it was generally seen as an area of study for the academically able. This view changed significantly in the 1990s when most states and territories introduced languages programs in primary schools as part of their commitment to the National Goals. Since then, a great deal of development has occurred in terms of numbers of programs, numbers of languages learners and the number of languages taught. In 2003, the Ministerial Council of Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) undertook a Review of Languages Education in Australian Schools. The Review found that nationally:

- approximately 50% of students were learning a language in mainstream schools
- there were 146 languages being taught in both mainstream and non-mainstream school settings. This included:
 - 103 languages (including 68 Australian Indigenous Languages) taught in government, Catholic and independent schools
 - 69 languages taught through after hours ethnic/community languages schooling.
- six languages emerged as the most commonly taught. These were, in order of enrolment numbers: Japanese, Italian, Indonesian, French, German and Chinese. More than 90% of languages learners were learning one of these languages.

Expansion of languages programs – outcomes lag behind inputs

There can be no denying that there has been significant growth in the inputs to language education over the past 20 or so years. In the words of Professor Joseph Lo Bianco:

*“Among the nations of the Anglo-American world, Australia stands out for its energetic efforts to develop a comprehensive and ambitious approach to language education policy. Since the mid-1980s, there has been massive growth in investment in language programs and language study.”*²⁰

However the figures quoted in the National Statement and Plan on the penetration of languages in the curriculum give an incomplete picture of what is really happening in schools, in terms of outcomes. To say that 50% of students were learning a language in mainstream schools is an overstatement when one considers that many students have very few skills after being exposed to a “language” program. Can a program that offers a cultural experience with a few pieces of incidental vocabulary included be rightfully called a “language program”? Can students who are exposed to such a program rightfully be described as “learning a language”? Can it be claimed that students have “learned a language”, when they know only a few words and cannot engage in even the most basic of conversations?

The picture in schools is one of extreme variability in the quality of language programs. In describing their answer to the level of satisfaction with languages programs in their jurisdiction, one languages advisor said:

²⁰ Lo Bianco. Asian Languages in Australian Schools: Policy Options. Melbourne Asia Policy Papers, No.7. May 2005

“The final question says, ‘Are you satisfied with the quality of Languages Education?’ In schools where the program is well provided for, e.g. qualified teacher and adequate time allocation for lessons, the answer would be ‘yes’. But in schools where the administration has opted not to teach languages, the answer is ‘no’”.²¹

The Review also found that the expansion of languages programs had created significant challenges which still need to be addressed. These include:

- the need for appropriately qualified and trained teachers
- continuity in languages learning within schools, and from primary to secondary levels and beyond
- adequate time allocations
- supportive timetabling practices
- resourcing
- whole school commitment.

There is also an ongoing need to convey to the broader community the real and achievable benefits of effective languages education for all learners. The Review proposed that stronger collaboration at the national level was needed to further enhance the quality of the language learning experience and to make it a reality for all learners. Ministers of Education endorsed this call for a renewed national effort by agreeing to the development of a new National Statement for Languages Education, and an initial four year National Plan for Languages Education.

This research agrees with the viewpoint expressed in the National Statement that there are unaddressed challenges for language education in relation to adequate numbers of trained teachers, continuity between sectors, time allocations, timetabling practices, resourcing and the degree of whole school commitment. It also confirms the need for a far reaching public awareness campaign. These challenges will be discussed in more detail later in the report.

²¹ Languages Advisor, Victoria

Implications for jurisdictions and schools

Implications for jurisdictions and schools

In order to realise the vision of quality languages education for all students, in all schools, in all parts of the country, jurisdictions and schools need to take into account matters relating to quality and provision.

Quality programs and quality teachers

Quality programs depend on quality teachers. Quality teachers need supportive program conditions and a professional working environment. They also need to be well-trained and have opportunities to participate in ongoing professional learning, which focuses on the development of their linguistic, cultural and pedagogical proficiencies.

Qualified and trained teachers

A shortage of language teachers remains a major impediment to the realisation of strong, universal languages programs. Replacing teachers who are transferred, take leave or resign is a challenge for schools and jurisdictions. Sometimes a new language is started simply because a qualified teacher of the former language cannot be found. An ACT parent said:

*“The key issue facing my child with respect to learning languages is the lack of qualified and experienced teachers. All the children at my child's school suffer from this issue. The whole area of language teaching becomes too hard for the school as they cannot get or keep language teachers for more than a term or two before they move on to something else (this is not an issue in any other core subject)”.*²²

When schools in urban areas such as Canberra find difficulty in recruiting and retaining teachers, it is not surprising that the problems are magnified in rural regions.

Language teacher issues	Pa %	St %	LT %	P %	LA %	TL %
Some Language teachers in my state are poorly qualified	NA	NA	51	NA	66	66
Language teachers at my school are well qualified	50	NA	NA	74	NA	NA

Table 10

Table 10 indicates that around half of languages teachers agree that other language teachers in their state are not well qualified, with language advisors and tertiary teachers recording even stronger agreement. Whilst 74% of principals said that language teachers at their own schools were well

²² Parent, ACT

qualified, the fact that 26% could not agree with the proposition indicates that the issue of qualifications is real.

Consistency of quality is also an issue. Whilst there is no suggestion that the range in quality of languages teachers is any different from that of other teachers, this factor may be more crucial in the languages area because the numbers are small. Sometimes only one teacher carries responsibility for the entire languages program of a school. At best it will be only a small team. Young language teachers rarely enjoy the same level of collegial support available to teachers in other subject areas, especially if they are placed in more remote locations. Professional networks are harder to establish away from the cities and provincial towns.

Morale of language teachers

Table 11 confirms that the morale of language teachers is not high. The dynamics of the factors which influence morale are complex, and may affect different people in different ways. It is reasonable to assume that any initiatives that value and support language teachers and their work will have a positive influence on morale.

Language teacher issues	Pa %	St %	LT %	P %	LA %	TL %
Morale is high amongst my Language teaching colleagues, in both schools and Universities, regarding the future of Languages	NA	NA	31	NA	5	13

Table 11

Recommendation 4

The low morale of language teachers needs to be acknowledged and steps should be taken at to address this at national, state, regional and school levels where appropriate. A designated “Year of Languages Education” as flagged in the Plan would go some way towards addressing this issue, as would the identification and implementation of a range of employment incentives directed towards supporting these teachers.

Learning a language takes time

Cumulative nature of languages learning

Learning languages is a cumulative process. The development of deep understanding and language proficiency requires extensive engagement over a prolonged period of time. This means that sustained effort is essential, with frequent and regular lessons, appropriate time allocations, and with schools working together to improve continuity across the levels of schooling. Learners who begin languages study in preschool and the early years of schooling, and those who bring with them knowledge of other languages, are provided with a strong foundation for future languages learning.

Co-ordination across primary and secondary levels

Ensuring continuity in languages education is a persistent, all pervasive and largely unsolved issue. Language discontinuities exist between different levels of schooling and even within the same school over a period of time. Very few people believe that the transition between primary school and high school is handled well in the government and catholic schooling sectors. Where a school spans both primary and secondary levels, such as occurs in a number of independent schools, especially where teaching staff are shared, this structure is conducive to much better coordination.

Co-ordination, planning and leadership issues	Pa %	St %	LT %	P %	LA %	TL %
Languages are well coordinated between primary and high schools in my State	15	NA	24	23	8	4
In my experience, the Language I learnt at primary school continued on to my secondary school	NA	41	NA	NA	NA	NA

Table 12

Regional planning

The anecdotal evidence in this study suggests that there is little regional planning and dialogue in relation to languages education, especially in rural areas. A picture is painted of individual teachers working in isolation in their own school, or working across several schools, justifying their own existence to colleagues and principals but largely operating in a context devoid of wider professional support and planned language provision. One teacher puts it this way, when describing his/her situation:

“There is no continuity between Language programmes from primary to high school. Many students have to change languages. Lack of qualified teachers. No district plan for languages - the language taught depends on who they can get to teach. No consultation with high school teachers from feeder schools. Not acknowledged by District Office at all. No useful PD provided by District Office. Being in the country we are very isolated and have little access to good PD.”²³

²³ Teacher, WA

Recommendation 5

Each jurisdiction needs to audit the effectiveness of its regional planning and provision in schools and establish an action plan to address deficiencies.

Adequate and well structured time allocations

There are two issues in relation to the time allocated by schools to languages education. They are the quantum of time, measured in say minutes per week, and the way this time is organised or timetabled by schools. Whilst the amount of time may or may not be mandated by education authorities, it is clear from this study that mandating does not necessarily mean that this amount of time will be actually allocated by individual schools. The study found a high level of dissatisfaction with time allocations.

Challenges for Language teaching	Pa %	St %	LT %	P %	LA %	TL %
My school allocates sufficient time for students to properly learn a Language	NA	47	46	44	NA	NA
Schools do not generally allocate sufficient time to properly learn a Language	NA	NA	NA	NA	80	91

Table 13

A teacher from Tasmania echoes the views of many others;

"I believe students learn languages better if they learn it often - one lesson of 40 minutes a week is not enough if they are to memorise vocabulary, script and so on; I spend much of my lesson time in memorising activities, so that it takes a long time before I can move on to a new topic. We need more time for songs, games, and culture activities." ²⁴

Secondly, the way time is organised has a major impact on the success of language learning, which requires constant practice. Being able to converse in a second language is one of those skills that will disappear if not used often. Regular and frequent language lessons are therefore the key. Even if a school can only offer 90 minutes of languages a week, 3 X 30 minute lessons are better than 1 X 90 minute lesson. Fewer lessons make continuity more vulnerable, as a single interruption can halt all learning for a week.

The other issue in relation to time is longitudinal continuity. Commonly, secondary schools organise their curriculum structures around semester units. Within this structure, students may be required to study a language for one semester and then something else for the alternate semester. Such models also bring the 'use it or lose it' principle into play.

²⁴ Teacher, Tasmania

“LOTE is taught in yr 8 for 1 term, and then it can be picked up for a semester in yr 9 and 2 semesters in year 10. No wonder there are so few students. There is no continuity. The LOTE teachers are part-time, through choice and lack of language classes and are very demoralised.”²⁵

A recommendation on time allocations is made in Part 2

Supportive time-tabling practices

In addition to the timetabling practices mentioned above another major impediment to the uptake of languages in secondary schools is that of competition from other curriculum areas. Languages are often timetabled against attractive options such as arts or technology subjects. Schools then may overlay an element of compulsion, requiring for example that students choose one semester of a language in their first two years of secondary school. A common outcome of such arrangements is that students feel that they have been forced into a “compulsory elective” that is not of their choosing. This is a direct result of languages being treated quite differently from say mathematics, English and science.

“Languages often compete at high schools as a choice - where they are offered against many of the subjects seen as much more exciting - eg home economics, dance, drama. While languages can be exciting and fascinating, to be successful does involve real commitment to core information - the content is important as well as the process.”²⁶

Whole school commitment to languages education

Whole school commitment to languages education

Effective languages programs require whole school support, particularly from school leaders. The involvement of community members, as well as collaboration between languages teachers and colleagues in other key learning areas, influences the extent to which languages are valued as an integral part of the mainstream curriculum.

Why a whole school commitment to languages education is important?

The study received a large number of comments relating to the support that is necessary for languages to flourish in schools. Many teachers mentioned the role of the principal, who can shape the opinions of other staff and parents. But the issue goes beyond the role of the principal, as there are clear

²⁵ Teacher, Qld

²⁶ Teacher, SA

educational benefits for children when teaching staff work together in a co-operative way. The first comment below was fairly typical of the frustrations experienced by secondary school teachers when they find themselves in a school which drains them of energy through the indifference of colleagues and school leaders.

"I am somewhat dissatisfied in my job due to various happenings in my school - firstly we are constantly needing to explain the relevance of LOTE to colleagues and management. Secondly, there is little support for staff in the ongoing discipline of students who constantly act up in LOTE classes. Whilst I love teaching LOTE, I find it difficult to get myself 'up' for every day, when many students do not see the relevance of it, due to the attitudes of other teachers, their parents and friends. It is also difficult to sustain a solid program with insufficient time allocation." ²⁷

The second comment below describes a situation where language education simply hums along because of the value and esteem it holds within the school community.

"I LOVE my job as a language teacher in my school. I teach in the Junior School from Pre-primary to Year 6, and am supported by the parents, Junior school staff as well as the Junior School Principal and Headmistress of the College. I am in constant discussions with class teachers to make sure my lessons are relevant and integrated with class inquiries and I also work closely with the music specialist. I use technology to modernise my methods and make my lessons relevant to the 21st Century. At the same time this allows for Sounds to be included to written presentations. Although we create our own resources eg books, flashcards etc technology also allows us to create material for viewing on CD Rom and interactive games that are used at different levels/years. The special needs and extension teachers have also collaborated with me, to work with groups of students requiring "rewarding" extensions for a term eg Philosophical discussions in French etc ending with a special breakfast at a French bakery for example where French was again spoken throughout the duration of the excursion. I feel very supported by our Junior School Head for resources that I feel necessary or new language programmes or outings or any material that I feel is essential to stimulate my students". ²⁸

²⁷ Secondary school teacher, Victoria

²⁸ Junior school teacher, WA

Where do principals stand on Languages?

Of the 268 principals who participated in this study, 38% said that they were very satisfied with the language programs in their schools, 33% were somewhat satisfied and the remainder were neutral or dissatisfied. These results are broadly in line with the findings of the 2002 APPA Review into The Place of Languages Other than English in the Primary Schools.²⁹

“Some two thirds of primary principals who have chosen to undertake LOTE in their schools are positive about their programs. While sharing similar concerns with others in the sample, most have opted to continue with LOTE. Their positive responses indicate there is a place for LOTE in primary schools.

Approximately one third of principals’ overall impressions are not as positive about their local programs. These principals indicated a preference to opt out of LOTE in the future.”³⁰

It is likely that the group of principals who chose to participate in the present study represent a sample that is more supportive of languages than would be the case if all principals were surveyed. Table 14 supports this view, as it shows that 83% of principal respondents said that they were highly supportive of their own school language program, whilst the other groups believed that principals were less committed. Tertiary language teachers and language advisors both held the strong view that school principals were unsupportive of language programs.

Co-ordination, planning and leadership issues	Pa %	St %	LT %	P %	LA %	TL %
My school principal is highly committed to the school’s Languages program	45	45	62	83	19	3

Table 14

The APPA report also contained the following statement:

“If LOTE is to remain universal for all primary students, then it needs to be universally resourced ensuring equity for all schools, without impacting upon the overall curriculum. Otherwise the pressures of overcrowded curriculum, thinning of resources, access to quality specialists and intermittent programs will continue to erode the value of primary LOTE programs.”³¹

²⁹ The Place of Languages other than English in the Primary Schools – Perspectives of Australian Primary Principals. APPA. 2002

³⁰ Ibid.p3

³¹ Ibid. p10.

Whilst the attitudes and support of principals are key factors in the provision of quality school language programs, they are not always in control of the resources that they need, and are pressured by ever increasing curriculum demands and expectations. When a language program changes or dies in a school, it is too easy and convenient to simply blame the principal, without investigating all the other factors that may be in play.

Later this report looks at the need for a program to educate principals about the importance of languages in schools, and supports this suggestion in the National Plan. Notwithstanding this, it will be futile to simply implement such a program and expect principals' attitudes to change, without making it explicit that there will be extra resources to support language programs, in such a way that the National Statement becomes one of reality rather than one of aspiration. Principals need to see the 'colour of the money', and will not be swayed by empty rhetoric.

The way for MCEETYA to obtain widespread support for the National Statement is to formulate an implementation plan along the lines suggested in Recommendation 2 of this report.

Provision of languages

Choice of languages

All languages are equally valid. Learners gain similar social, cognitive, linguistic and cultural benefits, regardless of the language studied. Decisions made by individual jurisdictions and schools regarding the languages to be offered and supported, need to take into account local contexts. Other important factors to consider are availability of teachers and resources, learner background, and continuity of languages learning, especially at transition points in schooling.

Choice of languages

The study addressed the question of European vs Asian languages to see if there were any views on this issue. The results are seen in Table 15 below

Usefulness and relevance of Languages	Pa %	St %	LT %	P %	LA %	TL %
Asian Languages are more relevant than European Languages for Australian children	38	13	22	39	36	38

Table 15

As is quite evident, backing for the proposition that Asia languages are more important than European languages receives marginal support.

*"[I'm] not fussed about Asian versus European languages, although I might soon embark on Chinese myself as I believe we probably all will need to acquire some skill there. All language learning is good per se, even Latin."*³²

Whilst people generally believed that languages whether from Europe or Asia were equally valued, there was quite strong support expressed for students to be able to choose languages that suited them, rather than being forced into a particular language. We will return to this in Part 2.

³² Parent, Qld

Other providers need to supplement provision

A range of provision

Mainstream schools alone cannot provide the entire range of languages that learners may wish to study. Providing a wide range of languages is achieved through:

- collaboration among mainstream schools, distance education providers and government schools of languages
- in the case of Australian Indigenous Languages, schools working in partnership with Indigenous communities
- after hours ethnic/community languages schooling.

The study received some 40 written responses advocating a greater use of community resources. Similarly, there was equally strong support for capitalising on new web-based and distance technologies for both teaching and learning and for teacher professional development.

“This survey misses one of the key aspects of language teaching and learning that is always overlooked in studies. That is, that language studies cannot exist alone as a subject in the school. Rather, their success occurs when a holistic approach is applied; classroom language learning, school exchanges and sister school relationships, partnerships with community organisations and ethnic communities, and active support for the promotion and realisation of cultural opportunities. Unfortunately, many language teachers are like their colleagues, process workers within their schools who will take advantage of cultural opportunities or connections when they appear, but are unwilling to take the time or make the effort to become involved in external organisations that might sponsor such events or activities.” ³³

Community languages

This research did not examine the provision of community languages per se, although it appears that the reason for a strong preference for expanding rather than limiting the range of languages taught in schools was related to a desire for students to learn community languages. Parents and students indicated that they would like to have more choice in the languages that were available for study at school. A number of responses indicated that this choice should include community languages.

³³ Teacher, Tasmania

Indigenous languages

A distinct and explicit presence for Australian Indigenous Languages

Australian Indigenous Languages have a unique place in Australia's heritage and in its cultural and educational life. For Indigenous learners, they are fundamental to strengthening identity and self-esteem. For non-Indigenous learners, they provide a focus for development of cultural understanding and reconciliation. The choice of which Australian Indigenous Language should be offered requires careful negotiation with Indigenous people. It also requires recognition of protocols related to language ownership, language maintenance and revival; and acknowledgement of the cultural connections and contexts of languages within Australian Indigenous communities.

This research did not attempt to examine issues around indigenous languages, although a number of responses indicated that this was a serious omission in the research design! The parent organisations believe that the issue of indigenous languages is deserving of a research project in its own right.

Part 2: Implications of the National Plan for Languages Education in Australian Schools 2005 – 2008

Structure of the National Plan

The National Plan is constructed to focus on six major, overlapping strategic areas, or strands.

Measures of effectiveness

Two measures of the effectiveness of the Plan are proposed, being collection of student participation data and the development of sample assessment processes. From the experience of the last decade, participation data by itself is incapable of providing an accurate picture about the reality of what may or may not be occurring in language classrooms. Will the project of developing assessment processes actually be used to inform the interpretation of the participation data? One would expect that the broad outcomes of the current work on languages education will be:

- i) greater numbers of students participating in language programs
- ii) greater levels of proficiency in speaking, reading and writing in another language
- iii) greater appreciation and understanding of the cultures associated with particular languages

Introduction

The National Statement for Languages Education in Australian Schools provides an overarching framework for State, Territory and Australian Government activities. It affirms the place of languages education in the school curriculum, and describes the purpose and nature of learning languages. This National Plan for Languages Education in Australian Schools, as an initial four-year Plan for 2005–2008, reflects an agreed commitment by all Ministers of Education to act together to address areas of common concern. It aims to:

- establish long-term directions for languages education
- advance the implementation of high quality and sustainable programs
- maximise collaboration in the use of national, state and territory resources
- provide flexibility in implementation by individual jurisdictions.

The Plan focuses on six nationally agreed inter-dependent strategic areas. These are:

Strand one: Teaching and Learning

Strand two: Teacher Supply and Retention

Strand three: Professional Learning

Strand four: Program Development

Strand five: Quality Assurance

Strand six: Advocacy and Promotion of Languages Learning

At both national and individual jurisdictional level, efforts and resources will focus on the six strategic areas of the Plan, with yearly reports to MCEETYA to outline progress made, and a formal evaluation in the fourth year. The Plan reflects a commitment by Ministers of Education to work in partnership with the key stakeholders in languages education to implement and monitor the Plan. Its effectiveness will be measured through:

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

Details of the evaluation processes will be developed through national agreement with all jurisdictions.

Clearly, the participation data needs to be supported by data on student achievement outcomes, for any meaningful conclusions to be reached on the success of the National Plan in the future.

The actions formulated to address the six strands of the National Plan are fine as far as they go, but need to be prioritised. The biggest failing of the plan as it currently exists is that there is no requirement for any jurisdiction to actually do anything, except to participate in an exercise where further research and a range of other options are considered. There are no firm and binding plans to actually spend money on implementing initiatives which address the already well known shortcomings of languages education. Until the next steps are identified, publicised and impact on individual schools, scepticism will overshadow any optimism that has been generated to date.

Recommendation 6

MCEETYA needs to prioritise the actions in the Plan, avoiding those pseudo actions where further research is not required. Jurisdictions should direct their funding to these priority areas.

This report will now reflect on those action areas proposed in the Plan where the study is able to make an informed comment.

Strand 1 – Teaching and Learning

Teaching and learning

Objective

To strengthen and promote the quality of teaching and learning practices to ensure that all learners in Australian schools have the opportunity to achieve high level outcomes in languages learning.

Underpinning principle

All learners in Australian schools are entitled to participate in quality languages programs and to achieve high standards of knowledge, skills and understandings.

This strand represents the key outcome of the National Plan - an entitlement for every Australian child to participate in high quality programs and to achieve high standards. If this outcome is to be achieved, the current inconsistencies in teaching and learning that are evident across the country need to be addressed. Currently, there is ample evidence to support the assertion that quality teaching and learning **does** take place in many schools across the country. The challenge is to replicate this good practice in all schools, both government and non-government, in all states.

Actions

- Develop strategies to increase participation in languages learning in the compulsory and non-compulsory years of schooling.
- Develop and implement a web-based strategy to disseminate information about relevant and recent Australian and international research and development and materials development, to support information exchange and to encourage ongoing collaboration.
- Share information about effective teaching practices, inter-cultural language learning and classroom based research, and promote through the web-based strategy.
- Consider areas for further research and development to provide opportunities for ideas and new programs to be developed and tested in challenging environments, to embed change at the local levels and to share the experience nationally. Areas to consider include:
 - the pedagogical and assessment implications of inter-cultural language learning
 - languages learning and literacy development
 - factors affecting long-term gains in languages learning
 - impact of program conditions and working environment on teaching and learning
 - factors which inhibit successful languages education
 - transition and continuity from primary to secondary schooling
 - the unique demands of teaching and learning in after hours ethnic/community languages schools
 - the unique demands of teaching and learning Australian Indigenous Languages
 - the contribution of Australian Indigenous Languages to community led maintenance and revival of Australian Indigenous Languages and cultures
 - current provision of languages at senior secondary level
 - languages learning in the early years of schooling
 - languages and vocational education
 - use of information and communication technologies in languages classrooms.

Increasing Participation

Table 16 below provides a snapshot of views about student target groups for languages. Note that there was relatively weak support for the notion that students who struggle with English should be exempt from learning another language. This is despite the relatively large number of comments received from parents who took the view that schools should “teach English first”. The study also received a number of suggestions in relation to students with special needs. In line with the fact that the term “special needs” covers a very wide spectrum of students, the sensible strategy is for schools to look at each individual case on its merits. Anecdotal evidence provided from a number of teachers cited cases of particular students with learning difficulties enjoying and making good gains in language classes.

In relation to whether languages should be compulsory or optional, the table indicates that students are the weakest supporters of compulsion, for both primary and secondary levels. One reason for this response is likely to be their experience of classroom behavioural problems. For example:

“I think that LOTE is lost on a lot of people that don't want to do it and in turn they screw around in class and make it harder for the ones who want to learn. It should definitely be optional as 95% of students from Year 7 to

Year 9 don't want to do it and they should be able to choose other classes."³⁴

On the other hand, many students accept that languages are an important part of the curriculum, but want more internal choice. Given the resource implications of providing more languages and therefore more choice, it is hard to see these suggestions being realised, however it is important to understand where the students are coming from.

"I personally don't like the subject and find it hard to grasp. It would be a lot better if the students got the chance to choose whether or not to do the subject. And then they should also have a bigger range of language subjects, therefore if you're not interested in the one, you have another choice instead of being forced to do something you don't want to." ³⁵

Should all students study Languages? Should it be compulsory?	Pa %	St %	LT %	P %	LA %	TL %
Students who struggle with English should not have to learn another language	20	33	10	23	19	2
Special needs students should be withdrawn or exempted from Language classes	16	20	NA	22	16	4
Language learning should be compulsory in every primary school	67	42	81	60	66	82
Languages should be compulsory for all high school students in the junior years	66	42	75	65	74	91

Table 16

Whilst a majority of parents, teachers and principals believe that languages should be compulsory in primary schools and in the early years of high school, support for this proposition falls well short of 100%. Their responses are most likely tempered by the reality of the present situation. For example, some parents see low level outcomes, and rightly question why languages should be given any priority. Some secondary school teachers feel that it would be better for their students if they had not been exposed to languages in their primary schools. Some principals probably believe that teacher quality and supply issue, already stretched to the limit, would not cope with any increase in participation.

There is evidence that simply making languages compulsory at high school can be counterproductive. For example, a significant number of NSW principals made comments along the lines of the one below:

"Languages learning in NSW has been bedevilled by the decision of the Carr government to make it compulsory for all Stage 4 students. This has led to classes full of students with no interest and no intention of continuing the study. It has also led to the "dumbing down" of courses to

³⁴ Student, Victoria

³⁵ Student, Victoria

a level of developing some cultural appreciation of the society taking precedence for students over learning the language.”³⁶

The NSW experience is clearly one of top level policy outstripping the capacities of schools and the NSW DET to deliver quality outcomes.

Table 16 provides evidence of the range of thinking evident when people were faced with the question of how to strengthen languages education. One area of consensus, and supported in table 17 is that a strong majority of people believe that it is best to start learning a language in the early years of schooling.

Languages target group strategies	Frequency
Make Languages optional at high school	42
Make Languages compulsory at high school (like other KLA's) (some say to Yr 12)	31
Make Languages compulsory but provide internal choice in high school	15
Start teaching Languages in the early childhood years	48
Make Languages optional in primary school or don't teach it at all Note: large numbers of parents say "teach basics first"	14
Mandate Languages in primary school and specify adequate time allocation	15

Table 17

Recommendation 7

Reducing the extent of compulsion would send wrong messages about the value of languages education. It is recommended that schools and jurisdictions maintain the current levels of compulsion, and work on increasing the quality of provision.

Which languages and how many?

Sixty eight comments were received which were in favour of increasing the range of languages taught in Australian schools. Only seven called for a reduction in the number of languages. Further analysis of this finding would indicate that people were not really calling for an expansion of the number of languages taught nationally – it is more a question of expanding the range of languages available in their own local schools.

Which Languages should be taught and how many?	Frequency
Increase range of Languages offered (more choice) Offer existing languages more widely – some comments reflect individual wishes and circumstances, including a desire for greater access to community languages	49
Rationalise (reduce) range of Languages offered	7
Make Spanish more widely available	10
Introduce AUSLAN	6
Introduce Esperanto	3

Table 18

³⁶ Principal, NSW

The quantitative data in Table 19 below also indicates that there is quite weak support for the proposition that the number of languages taught in schools should be reduced.

Knowledge about and support for the National Plan	Pa %	St %	LT %	P %	LA %	TL %
Australian schools should reduce the number of Languages on offer in order to improve learning continuity between schools and the supply of teachers	29	NA	25	35	40	17

Table 19

Recommendation 8

Jurisdictions and schools should not reduce the number of languages that are currently taught. They should consider increasing the range in individual schools to provide students with greater choices, particularly in the junior high school years.

Use of web based strategies to share and disseminate information

The study elicited a number of responses where teachers referred the research to various web-sites, other research, programs and curriculum activities. It is evident that a considerable amount of information is already available electronically, and it would be of benefit if the various sources were collated and published. The parent organisations sponsoring this research intend to develop a languages web site which will add to the resource base.

Resources available for Language teaching	Pa %	St %	LT %	P %	LA %	TL %
Access to good quality ICT is a problem for Language teaching	NA	NA	69	NA	61	55
I am convinced of the value of ICT as an appropriate tool for learning Languages	NA	NA	83	NA	83	63

Table 20

Whilst table 20 is somewhat tangential to the above finding, it demonstrates that language teachers value the use of new technology in teaching and learning. They are therefore highly likely to use it for their own professional learning. The finding that 69% of language teachers agree that access to Information and Communications is a problem, should be interpreted literally. That is, access to the infrastructure (specialist rooms, hardware and high speed broadband) is currently a resource issue in relation to classroom delivery. This may well be a problem that affects other subject areas, but one that should and can be addressed. The important finding is that language teachers know and understand the value of web-based learning.

Recommendation 9

Education jurisdictions should publish information about language teaching and learning electronically, and share this information with other jurisdictions

and schools across state borders and between government and non-government schooling sectors.

Inter-cultural language learning

The study reports on two direct findings related to intercultural language learning (ILL). The first was that most respondents believed that parents would have little idea of the meaning of this term. This was reported on in Part 1 of this report. The point needs to be re-emphasised; If ILL is indeed meant to be a pedagogical centre-piece, then surely it is incumbent on schools to be in a position to communicate its meaning to parents in simple language, so that they can understand the intent of the curriculum.

The second direct finding relates to the ease/difficulty that language teachers have in implementing ILL.

Intercultural language learning	Pa %	St %	LT %	P %	LA %	TL %
Language teachers often struggle to effectively educate students about intercultural knowledge	NA	NA	27	NA	53	56

Table 21

Language teachers were asked to respond to the proposition that “I am struggling to effectively educate students about inter-cultural knowledge”. Whilst only 27% of languages teachers agreed with the proposition, the level of disagreement was only 45%. This would indicate that a sizable minority of teachers are not totally comfortable with ILL. Over half of language advisors and tertiary educators agreed with the same proposition. There is a strong indication that the work on developing ILL skills in teachers is unfinished business.

A more indirect insight into the status of ILL comes from the apparent lack of helpful curriculum documentation in relation to languages education, especially in primary schools. The following two comments are pertinent:

“Education authorities have very little idea (or interest) in what is actually taught, especially at primary level.”³⁷

and,

“The curriculum frameworks need to be tighter and more demanding in the junior levels. A detailed 'best practice' curriculum needs to be provided for teachers to work from. Students need to have access to books and texts to take home and in some cases keep (Mine have brought nothing home in seven years). Resources should include recorded materials and the ability for any child to access on the internet.”³⁸

³⁷ Parent, Victoria

³⁸ Parent, Victoria

A number of participants expressed concern at the quality of the current documentation supporting the delivery of language programs.

Languages curriculum strategies	Frequency
Develop curriculum documentation - make it more useful to teachers. Clarify purpose first – how much culture, how much language? Increase accountability of how and what is taught.	22

Table 22

Twenty two comments were received on the inadequacy of curriculum documentation. It is evident that primary school teachers are largely required to invent their own programs. Consequently, it seems that the purpose of language education is not clearly defined or documented, program quality is highly variable, and that there are few accountability mechanisms in place to monitor student achievement standards. Some schools concentrate on culture, others on language acquisition. If the curriculum is so highly teacher-centric, is it any wonder that continuity suffers when teachers move on? A further indication that the purpose of ILL is not necessarily being reflected in student learning is encapsulated in the comment of a Western Australian teacher.

*"I am all for "intercultural language learning" but I feel that in the push to support this we have lost sight of one of the important more "academic" aims of LOTE programmes, and that is to be able to actually produce students who can leave high school with an extremely functional and useful grasp of a second language. A student being only able to remember the word "Konnnichi wa" at a student reunion or happens to know a few origami tricks or how to make sushi in 10 easy steps is really not an example of a successful language programme. If we really want students to believe that languages will help them in the future job market, then our programmes and forms of delivery need to become a whole lot more rigorous and academically demanding. "Cultural understandings" and a broader world view are of course are very important, but this should not be the duty solely of LOTE departments around Australia!"*³⁹

Intercultural language learning as an approach seems to be giving unintended legitimisation to programs where the language components are being downgraded.

Recommendation 10

Inter-cultural language learning needs to be clearly defined and steps should be taken to inform all stakeholders just what is and what is not legitimate to be included in this approach. Jurisdictions and schools should assist languages teachers by clarifying curriculum documentation and producing sample courses (including resource lists) for teachers to follow.

³⁹ Teacher, WA

Languages learning and literacy development

The links between English literacy and learning other languages was canvassed in Part 1 of this report, and should form part of a media campaign which will be discussed later. See also recommendation 3

Impact of program conditions and working environment on teaching and learning - teacher release and lack of classrooms

Two findings are particularly relevant here. Firstly, in primary schools across the country, a very common practice is for the Language teacher to provide release time for the classroom teacher. This practice seems to introduce a whole range of problems, the most significant being that the Language teacher is often seen as an itinerant visitor, not embedded into the culture of the school. The following two comments go to the heart of this matter:

"I feel that the LOTE classes are more disorganised and less well behaved because most of the LOTE teachers are only there part time, a bit like a relief teacher. If the LOTE teacher were an integral part of the school, or an existing staff member who was qualified to teach LOTE then it could be done as a whole school, embedded in all areas of learning on a day to day basis." ⁴⁰

and,

"The time allocated to Language is often non-contact time for homeroom teachers - this cements its separateness - there seem to be little continuity between LOTE and literacy more generally." ⁴¹

Languages delivery strategies	Frequency
Change the model of language delivery in primary schools whereby language teachers provide mainstream teachers with release time.	27

Table 23

Twenty seven written responses referred to the inadequacy of this particular staffing model.

So a common problem in primary schools is that languages teachers and mainstream teachers do not interact. The language teacher comes in and the mainstream teacher goes to a staffroom. There is little opportunity to discuss links with other school programs, pedagogy, individual students, assessment, or any of the other things that are so important in all other curriculum areas. This factor alone makes it very difficult for schools to develop a whole school approach to languages education.

⁴⁰ Teacher, WA

⁴¹ Teacher, Qld

Recommendation 11

Jurisdictions and schools should look for creative ways to abandon the model whereby language teachers provide release time for other teachers in primary schools, as this practice places major constraints in implementing an integrated approach to languages education at this level.

The second issue that seriously impacts on good language learning in many schools is associated with the former. The language teacher occupies the mainstream teacher's classroom as a temporary visitor. This makes it especially difficult to construct a languages rich environment – seating plans may not be disturbed, posters on walls may be discouraged, the blackboard may be full and not to be touched; the list goes on.

“When the Courier Mail reported on LOTE and interviewed Principals of State Primary schools what stayed in my mind was the general negative attitude of these educators to languages. There are LOTE primary school teachers who do NOT have their own LOTE classroom (one teacher held some of her classes outside), who have to battle to get one, or who 'visit' a classroom 'owned' by a primary school teacher (no posters please!) and are regarded with almost suspicion. There are primary school teachers who have such a narrow vision of the role of LOTE that they see the primary LOTE teacher as someone below their own aura.”⁴²

Recommendation 12

Wherever possible, schools should make concerted efforts to provide languages teachers with their own dedicated classrooms.

Factors affecting long-term gains in languages learning

A multitude of factors combine to inhibit long term gains in languages learning. These are already known, and this study has simply confirmed a great deal of pre - existing knowledge. A key issue already mentioned relates to the time allocated to languages and the way it is organised. Increasing the time allocation is a resource issue that cannot be ignored.

Languages delivery strategies	Frequency
Increase time allocation to Languages (time allocated should be adequate frequent and regular) Allocate same time as other KLA's. Ensure that centrally mandated time allocations are actually implemented	111
Avoid “semesterisation” of Languages	15

Table 24

Table 24 indicates that this study received 126 suggestions about time allocations. 111 said that the time should be increased, and another 15 commented on the semesterisation of languages, an operational policy that serves to fragment language learning in a large number of secondary schools.

⁴² Teacher, Qld

As an alternative to commissioning further research as suggested in the Plan, a far better use of funds would be to put in place some measures that directly counter these factors.

Recommendation 13

Authorities/schools should examine their timetabling practices and establish alternative models for schools to follow that do not discriminate against languages learning. Such an examination would include looking at issues that affect the continuity of language learning, the frequency of lessons and competition from other subject areas. Plans should be developed to gradually increase the time allocated to languages lessons in those schools where the time allocation is judged to be inadequate.

Transition and continuity from primary to secondary schooling

As reported in Part 1, the transition from primary school to high school is generally viewed as being poorly handled.

Local co-ordination strategies	Frequency
Co-ordinate programs across school sectors – local planning, pooling of students. Curriculum and advisory support, PD , relief etc	88
Connect education authorities, schools and universities. Upgrade language teacher practice placements	9

Table 25

Table 25 above indicates that 88 responses called for greater local planning and co-ordination of languages education. The main issue arises from schools operating largely independently from one another. A lack of dialogue between schools seems to be the norm, rather than the exception. Structures to encourage co-operative curriculum planning between primary schools and secondary schools are rare. The issue is not necessarily simply one of ensuring that the languages taught in primary schools follow on to local secondary schools. Languages can be picked up for the first time at secondary school. The issue is more one of students who have learned a language in primary school being given the option of continuing that language at high school. One suggestion put forward to overcome the problem of small numbers was for schools to cooperatively “pool” students.

In addition to coordinating the languages curriculum across sectors, there were calls for better regional provision of professional development, advisory services and relief teachers. There were 9 comments concerning the need for better links with universities relating to teacher practice placements. As will be reported on later, schools and universities also operate independently from one another – people in schools believe that the links could be closer, so that there is a greater level of understanding between the two sectors.

Recommendation 14

Each jurisdiction needs to audit the effectiveness of the primary to secondary transition in every cluster of schools and establish an action plan to address deficiencies.

Languages at senior secondary level – student grouping

There are a cluster of findings here, all aimed at supporting languages at the senior secondary levels. They relate to resourcing small classes, student incentives, grouping practices and greater use of distance education techniques.

Teachers made a number of complaints about the ways in which students were grouped. Examples included native speakers and non-native speakers in the same classes at Year 12 level, combined year 11 and 12 classes and newly formed high school classes where primary school students have had very mixed experiences. This latter practice results in many students choosing to “drop” a language at the earliest opportunity, with the unlikely prospect of returning to the language in subsequent years.

“Very often Yr 11 and Yr 12 students are taught in the same class, as not many students continue with their language. This is an absolute disgrace. It compares with specialist math Yr 11 and Yr 12 being in the same lesson - in fact, it is worse, as language learning needs students to engage in oral exercises, practicing, listening etc. etc. - Yr 12 students work on a very different level than Yr 11 students”.⁴³

Tables 26 and 27 indicates that a total of 73 comments were received in relation to providing sufficient resources to schools to allow small discrete classes to operate at senior levels.

Languages delivery strategies	Frequency
Avoid multi-level ability grouping, especially at senior levels – how can it be fun and or challenging for both groups? Introduce streaming.	29

Table 26

Language teacher staffing issues	Frequency
Fund schools to enable smaller/any classes to operate. Schools should provide a curriculum guarantee – that is, if a student starts a language, it will go through to Year 12.	44

Table 27

A number of schools access open learning or distance education providers when senior student numbers are low. This is to be applauded, however it

⁴³ Teacher, SA

would appear that other schools simply cancel classes, or introduce multi-level or multi-year grouping to address the problem. This is not an easy issue for principals to deal with, as they have to balance many competing pressures on resources.

Recommendation 15

Jurisdictions and schools should allocate extra staffing resources to avoid situations where grouping students who are at very different levels of proficiency disadvantages both groups.

Languages at senior secondary level – appropriate courses

Another separate but related issue is the lack of differentiated courses for native and non-native speakers. In a number of States, there is only one accredited course at the year 12 level in particular languages, such as Mandarin. As native and non-native speakers are assessed together, it is reported that many competent, non-native speakers choose other subjects, because they believe that their university entrance scores will suffer under this competitive assessment regime.

“If our system continues to place true 2nd language learners in the same ranking system as native speakers, then one can not blame students for deciding not to continue their language studies into their senior years. It is all very well to assess students on a criteria based assessment system, but totally unjust to then rank them against native speakers in order to calculate their OP”⁴⁴

Eleven responses were received that alleged that Year 12 language courses were simply too difficult. This claim needs to be investigated.

Languages curriculum strategies	Frequency
Make senior courses achievable (Comments received from NSW, NT, QLD, SA and VIC)	11

Table 28

Recommendation 16

Curriculum authorities should examine senior secondary course provision to ensure that courses which differentially target native speakers and non-native speakers are available through to Year 12. The level of difficulty of Year 12 courses and assessment should be re-assessed.

Incentives to study languages through to Year 12

Some 68 suggestions were received in relation to various types of incentives to support the continuation of languages through to the end of Year 12. Some

⁴⁴ Teacher, Qld

of the incentives listed in Table 29 apply to teachers as well as senior students. Some of the suggestions for students include:

- Providing subsidies for student overseas excursions
- Providing scholarships for student overseas travel/study/work on the completion of Year 12
- Increasing funding for international student exchanges
- Provide a bonus for the university entrance scores of students who include a language in their Year 12 subject package
- Provide a suite of language prizes for Year 12 students
- Increase the range of scholarships for students who wish to study languages at university
- Introduce beginner language courses in Years 11 and 12 with different assessment regimes from that of continuing languages.

In addition, there were several suggestions that Universities institute an entrance requirement that includes the study of a language in Year 11 or Year 12. In a similar vein, there were also a few suggestions that universities introduce a range of language pre-requisites for particular degrees, thereby putting extra pressure on senior students to include a language in their study program.

Develop a suite of incentives to promote Languages education	Frequency
Introduce international travel subsidies, funding, exchanges, sabbaticals, scholarships - for students and teachers. Bring back former SLSOC (NSW)	49
Introduce an incentive system for Yr 12 senior students to choose a language, such as - UAI bonus, prizes, exchanges, beginner courses - introduce incentives to become language teachers	19

Table 29

Recommendation 17

Schools and education authorities should establish policies of providing incentives directed towards boosting the attractiveness of learning languages through to the end of Year 12, and back up these policies with appropriate funding.

Language learning in the early years of schooling

A strong majority of people believe that it is best to start learning a language in the early years of schooling. In addition, there were 48 written responses which advocated this position. The strength of this finding would support the setting of a priority by the MCEETYA Taskforce to target the early years of schooling as a base on which to progressively expand the provision of languages education.

Should all students study Languages? Should it be compulsory?	Pa %	St %	LT %	P %	LA %	TL %
Learning a Language should start in the early years of Primary school	86	56	84	79	84	79

Recommendation 18

As resources permit, schools and education authorities should commence introducing languages education into first two years of primary school.

Languages and vocational education

As part of a marketing campaign, a number of people believe that the link between language expertise and a greater availability of career options should be promoted.

Develop a media campaign in support of Languages education	Frequency
Make explicit the link between Language expertise and greater career options	30

Table 31

Specifically, a campaign to promote the value of language learning should include a vocational component. Such a campaign should be supported by increasing the knowledge of school based careers advisors. Both language teachers and students reported instances of unsupportive advice being received from careers teachers in relation to the continuing study of a language.

"I loved learning German at school and wanted to continue studying in my VCE. But when I went to my careers counselling session with the Careers Adviser, he said that I should try to do another subject that I would do well in and that languages was pretty hard. I am not sure how he knows how well I would have gone in German. He also said that if I pick German the class will probably not run as it is cancelled each year because not enough people pick it. He said I was better off to try to get into a subject that would run." ⁴⁵

Recommendation 19

Schools and jurisdictions should work on making the links between learning languages and the increased career options which are available for young people who have language expertise. Careers advisors need to be made aware of these opportunities.

Use of information and communication technologies in languages classrooms

Language teachers in the majority consider that there is sufficient and relevant content available on the internet to support their teaching, although access to this resource appears to be constrained. The fact that 45% of students

⁴⁵ Student, Victoria

and 53% of principals agreed that their teachers regularly use the internet, would support an argument that access is somewhat limited, although this assertion is made in the absence of any objective data as to optimal use patterns. On the positive side, 83% of teachers value the use of ICT for learning languages.

Resources available for Language teaching	Pa %	St %	LT %	P %	LA %	TL %
Language teaching is well resourced in my school (LA/TL this state)	65	NA	65	63	14	10
My Language teacher uses computers and the internet in my classes	NA	45	NA	NA	NA	NA
Access to good quality ICT is a problem for Language teaching	NA	NA	69	NA	61	55
I am convinced of the value of ICT as an appropriate tool for learning Languages	NA	NA	83	NA	83	63
The internet lacks relevant content for use during lessons in my Language classes	NA	NA	24	NA	18	12
Language teachers at my school routinely use the internet and new communications technology in their classes	NA	45	NA	53	NA	NA

Table 32

Table 33 records that 43 suggestions were made about increasing the use of ICT and distance education techniques in languages learning. Given the challenges of establishing networks of languages teachers in more remote areas, it is not surprising that a number of those surveyed suggested an increased use of ICT for teacher professional development, as well as for teaching purposes.

Classroom teaching strategies	Frequency
Expand use of ICT/web/distance education techniques. Improve ICT access. Improve and increase teacher PD in use of ICT.	43

Table 33

Increasing the use of ICT in languages classrooms can be supported also on the grounds that it introduces another element of variety into lessons, and is likely to cater for a wider range of student learning styles. Engaging students is a challenge for all teachers, and the wider the range of delivery mechanisms utilised will assist in this quest.

Recommendation 20

Schools and jurisdictions should consider the requirements of language classes and classrooms when planning ICT infrastructure provision in schools.

Strand 2 – Teacher supply and retention

Teacher supply and retention

Objective

To enhance the provision of appropriately qualified teachers of languages in order to work towards addressing issues related to supply and demand.

Underpinning principle

A well-qualified and prepared teacher work force; together with program conditions and deployment practices that support quality, consistency and continuity; are necessary in the provision of quality languages education.

Clearly there can be no increase in student participation in languages without increasing the supply of quality teachers. Teacher supply was a major issue in 1996, and remains largely unaddressed 11 years later. Realistically, solving this problem will take time, given the shaky base on which jurisdictions have to build. And potential language teachers will be highly sought after by employers (both private enterprise and government) who operate globally. The conclusion is inescapable – the education sector must match other employers in terms of incentives and attractive working conditions.

Given the present (albeit generalised) picture of languages education in this country, it is evident that a talented young person who decides to become a language teacher must have an extraordinary sense of dedication, given the situation that they are likely to face in schools. They may well be asked to teach in a context where their work is not particularly well valued by the school community, where their position is vulnerable, where their job is one cobbled together from a number of part time positions, where professional support is lacking and where they continually have to justify their own existence. It is worth considering the story of a young South Australian teacher at this point:

“My role as a language teacher in a small country town has been to develop the French program beyond Year 8 level. To this end, I have been successful, with my fourth Year 12 class in 2007. However, it has been an emotionally exhausting operation. Undoubtedly, I have paid a high price for this success as I have had limited support from colleagues and even administration. In my first year at the school, I was told by a colleague (who is now a Deputy Principal), "French will never work here, kids won't choose it, because there are too many choices". Demoralising, perhaps but I have had to fight this attitude and negativity constantly over six years. Even today, students and parents alike have been "counselled out" of selecting to study a language. Fortunately the parent community

has been supportive of me but it's tough. At the age of 33, I have been considering starting my own family but the thought of losing my years of work because there are no teachers available, or at least willing to work in the country.

I am aware of a number of excellent jobs in the city which are becoming available, thus further reducing the possibility of acquiring another teacher here. I would really like to see a national campaign highlighting the importance of language learning and its benefits, promoting the good work in schools and the outcomes for students who have studied a language. Eg: My first Year 12 French student, is currently volunteering in Peru, as an English teacher. He plans to continue French and Spanish at university as part of an International Studies or Journalism Degree. To highlight the fact that we live in a global community and that being bilingual is no longer restricted to the Europeans. We have French people travelling and working in our region. A student working in the local McDonalds restaurant was able to assist four French tourists who spoke little English. She was delighted to recount this story to her class. This is REAL LIFE!!!!!!

As I say to my students, it's not about the French language - it's about being able to communicate with others outside of our cultural borders, to understand the mentality and attitudes of others in their words. So much is lost in translation, so live it and breathe it!

I hope that my little country life anecdotes can be of some use in your research. I am passionate about languages, I speak six in total and as an 'Anglo Saxon' Aussie try to demonstrate to my kids that anyone can do that!!" ⁴⁶

Potential languages teachers are in the employment market place, so is it realistic to expect that the teaching profession should recruit the brightest and the best to its ranks? If the answer is "yes", then an enormous amount of work needs to be done to realise this aspiration, including the implementation of a range of workforce planning strategies and structured incentives.

Negotiating incentives that impinge on existing enterprise bargaining agreements may well prove challenging and radical solutions such as offering Australian Workplace Agreements to a sub-set of the teaching force is likely to be an industrial impossibility.

This study supports all the proposed actions in the Plan, and urges decision-makers to commit resources, think innovatively and display bold leadership. Yesterday's answers are not good enough for tomorrow.

⁴⁶ Teacher, SA

Recommendation 21

Relevant authorities should establish an action plan that produces significant yearly increases in the numbers of language teachers in training, commencing immediately. Baseline data for the number of language teachers currently in training should be established, and each year from 2008 onwards the number of teachers in training be compared with the baseline data. This data should be published widely on an annual basis.

Actions

- Monitor and analyse data related to teacher supply and demand to support workforce planning at the jurisdiction level.
- Share information about effective workforce planning strategies currently being undertaken at jurisdiction level.
- Develop and implement initiatives to attract and retain more teachers of languages. Initiatives to consider include:
 - teaching scholarships to encourage school students to become teachers, particularly targeted at rural and remote areas
 - reimbursement of HECS fees
 - internships to students in final year of teacher training
 - scholarships for in-country training
 - additional tertiary places for languages education
 - incentive payments and career pathways
 - offers of permanent employment
 - recognition and support for overseas trained teachers
 - peer tutoring and mentoring programs
 - retraining opportunities.
- Review the content and structure of teacher education courses with a view to improving access to, and the quality of, preparation for languages teachers.
- Explore how to provide teacher preparation courses for Australian Indigenous Languages and for after hours ethnic/community languages schooling.
- Identify strategies to recognise and support speakers of Australian Indigenous Languages involved in school languages programs.
- Identify strategies to recognise and support community languages speakers teaching in after hours ethnic/community languages schooling.

Incentives for teachers

Respondents to this study canvassed the range of incentives that are mentioned in the Plan. Providing access to sabbatical leave was also put forward in this study.

Develop a suite of incentives to promote Languages education	Frequency
Provide incentives for language teachers and schools – target rural schools. Change current HR policy disincentives – such as short term contracts. Improve access to permanency. Introduce salary incentives.	17

Table 34

One specific issue that can surely be addressed is the practice of employing language teachers on short term contracts. As one principal says:

“The major issue of concern is always the one of financing Language Learning. Often teachers are not attracted by year to year contracted positions which in itself gives the impression that the subject is not important. However, with the limited funding options schools have, there is little other option.”⁴⁷

Recommendation 22

Relevant employing authorities should establish a suite of employment related changes and incentives designed to recruit language teachers to the teaching profession and to retain them once they have been recruited. A pool of incentive funding needs to be established to support such a policy.

Teacher education courses

Co-ordination, planning and leadership issues	Pa %	St %	LT %	P %	LA %	TL %
Schools and universities work well together on Language education issues in my State/Territory	NA	NA	17	4	15	25

Table 35

Language teachers, principals, languages advisors and university language teachers share a belief that there is a disconnect between schools and universities in relation to language education. Universities of course play an integral role in ensuring a continuing supply of language teachers. They are also solely responsible for the quality of their graduates, and can play a significant part in the provision of professional development and re-training of teachers. But if structured relationships between the school and university sectors currently exist, it is evident they have achieved little success in addressing current problems.

Tertiary level issues	Pa %	St %	LT %	P %	LA %	TL %
Language teacher training courses are of a high quality in Australian Universities	NA	NA	37	17	15	33
The Languages Department is strongly supported by the administration of this University	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	24
At my Institution, there are links between the Languages programs and the teacher education programs	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	39

Table 36

“There is little commitment to sound language teacher training in Australian universities. Most courses are well below the recommended 60 hours originally deemed necessary - and that was before mixed proficiency levels and the Internet arrived! Classes are for student teachers of mixed languages, so there is no longer any close training in teaching the specific

⁴⁷ Principal, Victoria

points of difficulty in the particular language, or the particular cultural factors that are important.

There is little or no supervision of professional practice from universities now, so that links between theory and principles and actual practice are left to the student teacher to make.”⁴⁸

The views expressed in the above quote seem to be supported by the data in table 36 above. There is very limited confidence in the quality of university level languages programs. If these perceptions are found to be true, successful implementation of much of the National Plan must be cast into serious doubt. One obvious response is to recommend an audit of the “languages capacity” of Australian universities be undertaken, and then decide whether to lift the capacities of those which fall short of being able to support the Plan – or alternatively to only work with those which currently have the capacity to respond to the demands of the Plan.

Table 36 also highlights some other impediments to the support that languages education can expect to receive from the tertiary sector. Language educators at this level generally do not feel supported by their respective university administrations. And only a minority (39%) believed that there were links between the languages and education faculties at their particular institutions. Not only do universities not work well with schools, their internal structures are not universally well configured to assist in the further implementation of the languages Plan.

Tertiary Languages Faculty strategies	Frequency
Upgrade quality/quantity of University language courses. Greater access to double degrees. Revise current language courses to make them more suitable for teachers – some too hard, others lack language specificity.	12
Include Language in primary school teachers pre-service training. Universities should properly assess language knowledge of undergraduates.	16
Define University Language Pre-requisites	5

Table 37

Table 37 summarises the suggestions received in this study which impact on universities. 12 responses referred to an upgrade of the quality of university languages courses, supporting the quantitative data. Obviously the nature of university languages programs will differ, as somewhat opposing views were put forward. Several people suggested that some university languages courses were simply too difficult. Others suggested that they were not language specific, which could be interpreted as being too easy.

“Tertiary Institutions Training prospective languages teachers should:

- *provide the resources for students to have both language specific methodology training as well as general languages teaching methodology training.*

⁴⁸ Tertiary language teacher, Victoria

- *be strict in enforcing qualification rules, i.e. a prospective student who has not had enough language training should not be admitted to a course aimed at training prospective languages teachers.”*⁴⁹

The above quote is in support of universities both enforcing standards and providing both language specific training as well as general teaching methodology.

The study also received 16 suggestions that languages be incorporated into all primary teacher pre-service training. This suggestion if taken up has resource implications for universities, however if progressively implemented it would tackle a number of factors which currently impede language education in primary schools. Mainstream teachers being given responsibility for language education would;

- assist in the integration of languages across the curriculum
- tackle the problems caused by language teachers providing mainstream teachers their “release time” – although it would shift this to another curriculum area
- facilitate a whole school view of the importance of languages
- encourage teachers to see the links between languages and literacy in English
- encourage more “immersion style” teaching of languages.

These suggested benefits are supported by the experience of a Victorian primary school teacher.

*“I am the LOTE coordinator at (name of school). We have three committed classroom teachers who have adequate grasp of the Italian language to teach our students. We work well as a team and do offer the students a very good program even though we could benefit from a qualified LOTE teacher. Our aim is to expose and interest our students to basic vocabulary and conversation as well as to increase their cultural awareness. I believe that there is a very positive attitude towards our LOTE program and our staff is very supportive of what we aim to achieve. We all believe that LOTE is a valuable program for our students.”*⁵⁰

This teacher acknowledges that the school would benefit from a qualified languages teacher, however is a long term objective of turning all primary school teachers into qualified languages teachers totally out of the question? Perhaps it is, but there are compromise positions such as:

- combining training in languages expertise with generalised primary expertise
- combining training in languages expertise with a specialised area such as music, the arts, science, ICT or Physical Education.

⁴⁹ Tertiary language teacher, Tasmania

⁵⁰ Teacher, Victorian primary school

The latter approach would allow more languages teachers to be employed on a full time basis in schools, instead of in multiple locations. It would also facilitate a bilingual or immersion style of teaching in the specialist areas. Imagine the music lessons being taught in French, or the PE lessons in Japanese!

Recommendation 23

Education authorities and universities need to establish structures whereby they work together to evaluate the success of existing language courses and to design new ones that meet the needs of the National Plan, including re-training of classroom teachers.

Strand 3 – Professional learning

Professional learning

Objective

To support the provision of high quality, ongoing and structured professional learning programs to further enhance the quality of teaching.

Underpinning principle

Ongoing and sustained professional learning programs are essential to quality teaching and learning.

Well structured professional learning programs are essential if languages teaching and learning is to be supported. Currently, language teachers often lead lives of professional isolation, an experience that should not be acceptable in the twenty-first century in a wealthy country like Australia. Where languages represent a small component of the school curriculum, it is likely to be allocated a small budget, which may not stretch to supporting involvement in professional development. Centralised or regional support in the form of specialised curriculum officers is often limited.

Language teacher support strategies	Frequency
Develop programs for all teaching staff and principals to improve support for Language education (language teachers should not to have to do it on their own). Career counsellor support is important. Principals should provide the same level of support for languages as other KLA's, including in-school disciplinary support.	71
Establish networks of Language teachers to reduce isolation. Such networks should address PD, welfare issues- also mentors for language teachers	27
Expand PD opportunities, Increase support and funding	23
Make PD language specific rather than general. Include professional development in classroom management techniques.	12
Support new teachers , especially those appointed to rural locations.	7

Table 38

Table 38 indicates that the study received 69 responses that suggested improvements to professional learning programs for languages teachers. In addition, a number of the responses in relation to ICT supported a greater application of this technology to professional learning. As broadband and 3G networks continue to be rolled out, this technology is becoming increasingly available for video-conferencing, teleconferencing and the like.

Table 38 also indicates a strong response in relation to professional learning for other school staff. Language teachers, like all teachers, need to work in a supportive environment. The attitudes and beliefs of principals, deputies, other teachers and careers advisors all contribute to the priority that a school

has for languages, and the esteem in which it is held. Ideally, there should be strong, influential leadership from principals that creates a climate where there is a critical mass of support for language teachers and language programs in every school. Unfortunately, the reality for languages is that must compete for resources with other subject areas. Whilst some KLA's enjoy protection from such competition, in most schools the same cannot be said for languages. As the African adage goes, "when the waterhole begins to dry up, the animals start to look at one another differently". Languages are usually the more vulnerable animals in resource scarce schools.

Actions

- Consider the development of structured and ongoing professional learning programs for teachers of languages, in order to maintain and strengthen their linguistic proficiency, and develop understandings of inter-cultural language learning and curriculum design, pedagogy and assessment, through opportunities such as:
 - accredited tertiary study
 - immersion weekends
 - vacation workshops
 - in-country study and exchange programs
 - community experience for teachers involved in Australian Indigenous Languages programs
 - accredited school based research projects which encourage reflection, dialogue and innovation
 - mentoring opportunities.
- Share information about successful models of professional learning at a national and state level.
- Promote incentives and initiatives aimed at encouraging teacher participation in ongoing and sustained professional learning programs, such as:
 - reimbursement of university fees for postgraduate study
 - study release time to facilitate postgraduate study
 - subsidies for in-country study and study tours
 - sabbaticals
 - optional tertiary accreditation
 - recognition of postgraduate qualifications.
- Explore how to enhance professional learning for personnel involved in the delivery of Australian Indigenous Languages, and of languages taught through after hours ethnic/community languages schooling.
- Consider the development of professional learning programs for school leaders to support them in their role of providing direction and managing quality languages programs.

Professional learning programs

This study received a number of written responses making suggestions along the same lines as in the National Plan for different types of professional learning programs. The need for such programs seems uncontroversial. It would seem that the only question which needs to be asked now is – what is stopping these happening? As with many other sections of the Plan, the only action that MCEETYA has agreed to at this stage is to “consider” further action.

Professional learning incentives and initiatives

The study received a number of suggestions concerning incentives to participate in professional learning programs similar to those mentioned in the Plan. Clearly an expansion of incentives over and above those already available will require additional resourcing. Whether or not additional resources will be provided will be a litmus test, revealing the true priority that jurisdictions have for the future of languages education.

Professional learning for school leaders

The importance of whole school support was mentioned previously. The study received 71 written comments which mentioned the need for learning programs for other teaching staff, including principals. A number of parents, teachers and language advisors focussed on the need for the principal's support in implementing strong languages programs.

"There is a large gap between government plans/policies and actual practice in schools. Languages teachers continue to feel let down by the system implementation of languages in the curriculum and in many cases by the attitudes of their own colleagues in other learning areas and in many cases principals who have outdated views on second language learning." ⁵¹

Of course languages teachers do not necessarily fully understand all the pressures on principals. If a school or system operates its curriculum largely on the basis of supply and demand, and provides principals with the autonomy to respond to local market forces instead of over-arching curriculum requirements, then languages will be one of the vulnerable areas. The community is much less likely to object to a scaling back of language provision than it would to say basic skills in primary school, or science, mathematics or English in secondary school. Further, when principals are faced with balancing global budgets, it is often easier to reduce language provision rather than subsidising it at the expense of other subjects. Many principals are unlikely to expose themselves to staff criticism, especially when their employers provide them with a level of decision making autonomy that does not call them to account for not meeting mandated curriculum requirements.

Recommendation 24

Education departments and employing authorities should address concerns about the nature and availability of teacher professional development as a matter of urgency. Similarly, the development of learning programs for school leaders on the value of languages should commence in the context of promoting the national plan.

⁵¹ Teacher, WA

Strand 4 – Program development

Program development

Objective

To enhance access, choice and continuity in languages learning in order to better meet a variety of learner needs.

Underpinning principle

Program structures need to be flexible to cater for the range of learners across the years of schooling; and take into account the cumulative nature of language learning.

This research elicited five fundamental responses to the issue of better meeting the variety of student needs. These were to:

- Group students of similar ability or language experience – some form of streaming
- Make languages optional so that students can self-select languages according to their level of interest
- Use a greater range of techniques, including ICT and distance education
- Integrate language learning across the curriculum in primary schools – make links with literacy and other curriculum areas
- Use immersion or bi-lingual techniques

Students in particular advocated that language classes should be fun, interesting and relevant. Many suggestions were received about the value of excursions, games, exchanges and overseas trips as a necessary part of languages education.

This study does not support any increase in the extent of “optionality” of language provision. Except for making languages optional the other 4 points above have some merit, but cannot be applied in all situations or locations. Whilst making languages optional in secondary schools would solve a number of problems, it does not address the issue of extending the reach of languages. This option would simply serve to take pressure off schools and education authorities to extend the uptake of languages. It would most likely result in a decline in languages provision. If this option was to be considered, it would have to be matched with a range of additional incentives for students to study languages, to counter the likely drift to other subjects.

Grouping students with similar language background or experience is problematic within single schools, however some kind of cross school or

regional grouping may be possible in some locations. The other three suggestions may all be applicable in particular locations.

Actions

- Share information about existing strategies and publications that support access, choice and continuity at the school and jurisdictional level, and promote through the web-based strategy.
- Consider documenting and disseminating models of good practice and effective operational management of languages education in a variety of school contexts and settings.
- Consider the development of curriculum materials to support the provision of a range of languages.
- Explore the scope for sharing existing distance education courses, and for collaborating in future developments to address gaps in the provision of distance education.
- Consider the use and future development of flexible learning technologies for the delivery of languages programs.
- Explore initiatives that strengthen connections between languages and the world of work (eg: development and articulation of pathways for languages learning in the Vocational Education and Training sector).

Good practice in language learning

The study received information from a number of schools that were highly successful in implementing language education programs. These schools would be well known in language teacher circles, professional associations and by education authorities. However it is unlikely that changing less successful programs into successful ones can be brought about simply by the dissemination of information about successful models. Invariably change happens when leadership is exercised, committing energy and resources to a new way of doing things. In other words, intervention must occur. This is not to say that sharing and dissemination of good practice should be discouraged. It should not. But leaders need to understand that languages teachers cannot make changes on their own. Intervention by leadership at the school, regional or education authority level is vital.

School level strategies	Frequency
Utilise community resources/expertise – pay for some native speakers (such as the Victorian language assistants)	40
Give students and parents more say and more information . Parents want more knowledge about languages in order to be able to support their children.	28
Provide “ curriculum protection ” for Languages. Reduce competition for resources	32
Integrate Language with other primary school subjects	19
Provide language teachers with their own language classrooms	19
Utilise outside class time/outside school hours, also community classes	7

Table 39

Table 39 indicates the range of responses received in relation to school based strategies that represent good practice in languages education. 40 responses advocated that language programs utilise community based resources to a greater extent. Such resources could include employing native speakers as

languages assistants (this already happens in some states). Other suggestions included using community expertise on a voluntary basis, not only in relation to specific language learning, but in cultural aspects of school programs.

28 responses mentioned the need to provide parents and students with more information on the benefits of learning a language. Students wanted more say in choosing their language of study. (Many also wanted the right not to choose a language).

Several suggestions were also received advocating greater use of time outside of the formal school day for learning languages.

Classroom teaching strategies	Frequency
Make Language classes more exciting/fun/relevant	63
Expand use of ICT/web/distance education techniques. Improve ICT access. Improve and increase teacher PD in use of ICT.	43

Table 40

Whilst 63 responses advocated making languages classes more exciting, fun and relevant, there was also ample evidence that many languages teachers make superhuman efforts to do just this. Given the elective nature of languages in secondary schools, teachers have to maintain sufficient numbers to justify their own continuing employment, which is very different from some practitioners in other curriculum areas. On top of this, and because of the smaller time allocation given to language classes, many language teachers have to teach more students than other mainstream teachers. Consequently it takes longer to establish good relationships with students and they may have more preparation, more marking, and be required to write more reports. In response to the proposition “I am overwhelmed with work” it is hardly surprising that 63% of language teachers agreed.

The use of ICT, web-based learning and distance education was well supported, with 43 comments being put forward.

Recommendation 25

Schools should be assisted to audit their current practice in languages education against the principles embodied in good practice. They should identify shortfalls in their own operations and develop individual action plans to address such shortfalls.

Development of curriculum materials

Whilst some teachers said that spent considerable time developing their own resources, a greater problem especially in primary schools is the lack of useful course outlines or indeed a basic languages syllabus for teachers to follow. Developing a set of syllabi, supported by sets of resources may seem somewhat old-fashioned, but such a move would surely assist in clarifying the purpose and expected student outcomes of language courses, as well as taking some of the pressure off teachers to develop their own materials.

A recommendation has already been made on developing model courses.

The following suggestions are a sample of those submitted pointing to innovative practice in languages education

ICT through French immersion

“Ruyton has introduced a content-based programme from P-6 with an innovative approach to timetabling. Students learn ICT in French.” ⁵²

Whole school cooperative immersion techniques

“I work part-time as a Languages Coordinator for the government system as well as teaching part-time in an independent school. The school where I teach has a staff that is extremely supportive of the Languages program and it makes a HUGE difference. The students begin the program in Prep which is a great time to start I believe. Sometimes the classroom teachers visit the language classes and support the learning by including target language songs as part of the music program, for instance. Junior students play games in the target language in some of their regular classes. That support by the whole staff is invaluable.” ⁵³

Accelerated Integrated Method

“AIM (Accelerative Integrated Method) is a gesture approach to the teaching of Languages and accelerates the acquisition of student fluency by providing students with the vocabulary and grammar that they need ...as they need it! The students learn their second language as they would their first language...through the ears and produce through the mouths BEFORE moving on the writing and reading. I teach exclusively in French and my students as young as grade PREP are coming out with natural spontaneous ...correct sentences in French. I also teach students who have learning difficulties and have had positive results.” ⁵⁴

The study supports the proposition that innovative ideas for language teaching and learning be collated and disseminated nationally.

Recommendation 26

Examples of good practice should be collected from schools and jurisdictions nationally, ensuring a range of diversity. Case studies should be written up in plain English, published and disseminated to every school in the country. This initial process should then be followed up with a national roll out of professional development for school communities to discuss the research. The outcome would be the establishment of statewide or regional planning teams to re-structure school language programs along best practice lines.

⁵² Teacher, Ruyton Girls School, Victoria

⁵³ Teacher, Tasmania

⁵⁴ Teacher, Victoria – see www.hearsaylearning.com for details of the AIM program

Strand 5 – Quality assurance

Quality assurance

Objective

To monitor and evaluate the provision and quality of languages education at all levels.

Underpinning principle

Monitoring and evaluation processes which engage jurisdictions and schools in reflection and dialogue will support provision of quality languages education.

Quality assurance processes are an essential part of monitoring the National Plan. Part of quality assurance should be the development of much more rigorous accountability processes, especially at the school and systemic operational levels.

Actions

- Develop a detailed evaluation strategy to monitor the implementation of this Plan.
- Collect and analyse student participation data on an annual basis for national planning purposes and to enable current provision to be measured.
- Explore the possibility of reporting participation data on languages through the Annual National Report on Schooling.
- Explore the development and use of student standards, program standards and teacher standards to support evaluation processes.
- Develop national sample assessment processes to determine student learning outcomes.
- Share information about effective evaluation processes implemented at jurisdiction and school level, and promote through the web-based strategy.

Current operational inconsistencies with the National Plan

If States through MCEETYA intend to develop a series of evaluation strategies to monitor the implementation of the National Plan, they should start by eliminating those operational inconsistencies that currently work against it. These exist in every state and territory if the views of practitioners are accurate. The following are a selection of views put to this study:

Queensland

“In Queensland there are strict rules governing time allocation and student exemption from LOTE but these are generally ignored by schools with marginalised LOTE programs through the approval of Regional and

District Directors who have the power to "bend the rules". So much for a multicultural Queensland !!!!" ⁵⁵

When is a mandatory time allocation mandatory? Is the Queensland government saying in effect that some problems in the delivery of languages in some schools are simply insoluble?

"It is extremely worrying that Ed Queensland has started to organise a trial in West Moreton area to basically cut LOTE from their schools, dependant on local school management, if they wish, and introduce instead 'Studies' which will be units close to SOSE cultural units (The words LOTE were not allowed to be used in referring to these units). If 'successful' in this area, would it continue to be introduced throughout the state? Many reasons were cited, including a lack of competent language teachers, and widespread 'behaviour management' problems in LOTE classes. This is of great concern." ⁵⁶

Queensland seems to be looking at changing the nature of languages education, by effectively removing the language component. This is not in accord with intercultural language learning, which preserves language rigour in its approach. In fact the West Morteon trial seems to represent a capitulation to the problems of language education, rather than an attempt to solve them.

Victoria

"Schools are removing LOTE teachers and replacing this with 'language awareness' a subject in name only with no guidelines, no curriculum, and no recognised qualification. Also it has NO OUTCOME." ⁵⁷

Victoria seems to be going down the same track as Queensland if the above comment is accurate.

"Money comes into Victorian schools as part of LOTE funding, but does not necessarily get spent where it is designed to be spent as it is up to the principal to decide where the funds go." ⁵⁸

How can a government justify allocating money to programs that do not operate? Does the decision making autonomy of individual principals override government policy?

"There is concern over the reporting of LOTE achievements in Victoria under VELS as it is late being implemented. The report will also be limited

⁵⁵ Teacher, Qld

⁵⁶ Teacher, Qld

⁵⁷ Teacher, Victoria

⁵⁸ Parent, Victoria

*to senior primary grades. The LOTE section can also be deleted from the VELS report. Schools feel they can delay reporting and this is lowering the status of LOTE.”*⁵⁹

If the reporting of language achievement is optional at the school level, how will Victoria be placed to report nationally?

Tasmania

*“I fear for the success of the implementation and acceptance of the National Statement and Plan unless it is mandated. In reality, if the Essential Learnings had not been mandated (especially with all the problems with it here in Tasmania), I wonder whether it would have been taken on by schools or accepted by parents. This will be exacerbated by the fact that our curriculum is being “refined” here in Tasmania and the draft document shows that languages will longer be regarded as a KLA. This seems to be completely contradictory to the aspirations of the National Plan, sends completely the wrong message out to the public, and puts languages on a very precarious footing in this state.”*⁶⁰

What is the real status and priority of languages education in Tasmania, if it is not specifically mentioned in the curriculum frameworks and is no longer a KLA? If it is not mentioned in the curriculum frameworks, what do language teachers actually teach? And on what basis or authority do they teach it? Where does Tasmania currently stand in relation to the National Statement and Plan?

Western Australia

*“Also the DET in WA only provide work fractions to cover LOTE for years 3 to 7 and I have always felt that there should be the opportunity for school communities to choose to begin LOTE earlier.. in years 1 or 2.”*⁶¹

How can WA introduce languages in the early childhood years of schooling with this policy in place? Can it find the teaching and other resources needed to shift the commencement of language learning into Years 1 and 2.

*“So many LOTE positions are now advertised as just a .4/.5 etc load that it makes a mockery of the effort and costs that individuals have gone to in order to become qualified LOTE teachers. References to going to work in the mining industry from LOTE teachers is not uncommon!”*⁶²

⁵⁹ Teacher, Victoria

⁶⁰ Teacher, Tasmania

⁶¹ Teacher WA

⁶² Teacher, WA

This particular HR practice does not support the recruitment or retention of language teachers in WA, or in any other state that operates along similar lines.

“Generally, funding is low, teachers are isolated - I need to travel at least an hour or two to find another Language teacher to share ideas and issues or moderate with. There is very little support from Central Office and none from the District, as no-one there has any background in languages.”

⁶³

Low level support such as that described above is not in harmony with the intent of the National Plan.

“Despite the compulsory nature of languages to year 9, some high schools are abandoning this.” ⁶⁴

Like the examples provided earlier from Queensland and Victoria, is there a capitulation underway in WA to the problems associated with the provision of universal language education?

South Australia

“In SA the curriculum standard for meeting the SACSA outcomes is 90 minutes of lesson time. I do not know of many schools that provide this in the catholic sector in which I teach.” ⁶⁵

What is the justification for SA Catholic schools allocating less than the specified time for languages?

“In South Australia, the compulsion factor has been removed which means that effectively schools can opt not to offer a language program.” ⁶⁶

Is this further evidence of a national capitulation?

New South Wales

“One of the aim of the National Plan for Languages is to make Language learning a relevant part of the curriculum and yet many aspects of the HSC exam (NSW) are not relevant to a young person's life (for instance, the monologue at Extension Level, or the analytical questions in Reading and Listening tasks). It is not right that the final outcome of a Language Learning path should be based on analytical, literary skills. These

⁶³ Teacher, WA

⁶⁴ Teacher, WA

⁶⁵ Teacher, SA

⁶⁶ Teacher, SA

outcomes put off many students who would otherwise be attracted by a course that offers them a skill for life.” ⁶⁷

Are the requirements of the NSW HSC a disincentive for students to include a language in their senior school studies? Why is this allowed to happen?

“One area of great concern is the continuing devolution of support at consultant level within the NSW DET. Indonesian, in particular is a language which has suffered diminishing student numbers in recent years and instead of looking at ways in which these numbers may be increased, the NSW DET has removed influential and highly effective and supportive personnel from its consultative ranks.” ⁶⁸

Is this another example of a government not providing leadership to maintain the provision of languages?

Northern Territory

“There is NO connection with languages between Primary and Secondary schools. Many students don't have to study a language.” ⁶⁹

This writer was from Darwin, a relatively small city where primary schools are clustered around high schools. Is there a compelling reason why the primary schools and high schools cannot engage in dialogue and coordinate their language courses? Is there a risk in implementing such a policy?

Australian Capital Territory

“..... the high schools in the ACT do not have a set course documents to work from so there are inconsistencies between schools. This makes it difficult for college teachers to address each student's individual needs.” ⁷⁰

Every high school in the ACT develops its own courses. There is little or no oversight of this process or the standards reached when students make the transition from high school to secondary college. Is there a compelling reason why ACT high school language courses cannot be standardised? Are there risks associated with doing this?

⁶⁷ Teacher, NSW

⁶⁸ Teacher, NSW

⁶⁹ Teacher, NT

⁷⁰ Teacher, ACT

Recommendation 27

Each education jurisdiction should identify and publicly acknowledge those policies and practices that run counter to the intent of the National Plan, and report back to MCEETYA outlining the steps that the jurisdiction is taking to eliminate or change those policies and practices, including milestones and a timetable of expected completion.

Strand 6 – Advocacy and promotion of languages learning

Advocacy and promotion of languages learning

Objective

To promote the benefits of languages learning in order to develop and strengthen positive community attitudes and perceptions of the value of languages education.

Underpinning principle

Leadership and advocacy at all levels, including high profile community members, educational leaders, teachers and students, are required to facilitate quality improvement in languages education.

This study found strong support for the need to strengthen community attitudes towards the study of languages. One of the most difficult and demoralising aspects of any teacher's job is to work in an environment where they feel unsupported by the broader community. Even more damaging to morale is when their own school community has reservations about the importance of their work. Even the subtlest lack of support by a school is transmitted to students and their parents. A concerted campaign is required to shift community attitudes towards the need for quality, widespread language education.

Actions

- Consider initiatives to promote the educational, cognitive, social and career benefits of languages learning, for example:
 - identify national champions from various walks of life
 - produce print and electronic publications and promotional materials
 - organise national forums and public meetings
 - designate an Australian Year of Languages to mark the importance of languages learning
 - enlist the participation of the media in developing a positive profile for languages.
- Share information about successful promotional activities undertaken at state, territory and individual school level.
- Consider initiatives to enhance student motivation and improve student retention in the schooling sector and into the tertiary sector (eg: bonus points, transition programs, exchanges, study tours, sister school arrangements, tertiary scholarships).

Need for a public relations campaign

Although the National Statement and Plan was released in 2005, only 18% of parents who participated in this study were aware of its existence. Not that this is necessarily surprising, but if it is to win the hearts and minds of all

stakeholders, parents as a group need to be included in relevant information loops and be invited to participate in appropriate strategies.

Perhaps more surprisingly, almost 40% of both languages teachers and principals were also not aware of this document. And if a large percentage of language teachers are not familiar with this initiative, it is reasonable to assume that very few teachers of other subjects are aware it. One of the major findings of this study is that, (in primary schools especially), changes to the languages programs require an across school understanding and effort. From this perspective, the National Statement and Plan is most likely to be a well kept secret in most of Australia’s schools.

Knowledge about and support for the National Plan	Pa %	St %	LT %	P %	LA %	TL %
I am aware of the National Statement and Plan for Languages Education in Schools 2005-2008	18	NA	61	62	NA	NA

Table 41

One of the first imperatives of the MCEETYA Task Force will to be ensure that the Statement and Plan is higher in the consciousness of people in schools Perhaps as an aside, another indication of a disconnect between central policy development and school operations, was the continuing widespread useage of the term “LOTE” by people in the field throughout the survey.

A second challenge for MCEETYA will be to convince all stakeholders that the Languages Statement and Plan represents a serious attempt to revitalise this curriculum area. Given the start/stop nature of earlier attempts to implement languages education policies in Australia, it comes as no surprise that all stakeholders expressed low levels of confidence that sufficient resources will be invested in the Plan to actually make a difference.

Notwithstanding this ingrained cynicism, there is a high level of support for a multi-pronged attack on the problems surrounding languages education. And to be fair, the answer is not just in the provision of financial resources. Unless the hearts and minds of the general public are positively engaged in this endeavour, there is considerable potential to waste a great deal of money.

One of the prongs of a multi-pronged attack, is a national media campaign. The study found strong support for such an initiative as one of the first steps of a change management strategy.

When asked for suggestions about how languages could be strengthened in schools, many people commented (see Table 42) that one of the first things to do was to convince parents and the general community of the benefits of languages education. Some 113 written comments specifically suggested one or more elements of a public relations/media campaign. 77 suggested a national campaign, supported by a range of specific initiatives that will be covered later in this report. 26 suggested that schools could do more at the

local level, and 10 suggested that parent organisations promote the issues with other parents.

Develop a media campaign in support of Languages education	Frequency
National publicity campaign addressing: importance of languages, promote events, forums – identify a national champion. Promote recruitment of language teachers. National year of languages.	77
Schools/principals should promote languages to a greater extent	26
Parent organisations should promote languages/parent education programs	10

Table 42

We need to run a nationwide advertising campaign (print, radio, television) about the benefits of Language learning. The parents of our current students went through school at a time when Language learning was not compulsory, and it is still seen by them as an "add-on" to the curriculum. We need to explain the many benefits of second language learning. [We] must build on a genuine national commitment, where the message about languages and multiculturalism are not mixed. ⁷¹

Some other suggestions received by the study, which support the actions anticipated in the National Plan include:

"I believe that there needs to be a PR/awareness campaign, building the profile of languages and reinforcing the importance of languages, particularly on TV. Having well-known people talk about how essential it is to learn about other cultures (and not to assume that your own is the best) would make an immense difference. When the Leggo ads came on TV and kids saw famous people speaking in Italian, they were really eager to give it a try. In the same way, we need to have high-profile people talking up languages on a REGULAR basis where students and parents will see it." ⁷²

The Leggo pasta sauce advertisements were indeed memorable and could be used as a model for an entertaining advertising campaign.

"We need a charismatic key figure to "champion" languages education throughout Australia." ⁷³

General Peter Cosgrove spoke gave an inspirational speech to the national languages seminar in 2002 ⁷⁴. Perhaps he or someone of his stature could be drafted into a media campaign to promote languages.

The following two contrasting views were received from WA language teachers. The question comes down to who should market languages – from

⁷¹ Teacher, WA

⁷² Teacher, NSW

⁷³ Teacher, NSW

⁷⁴ Working Together on Languages Education: A National Seminar. DEST. 2002

above or from languages teachers themselves. In the reality of today, there must be some expectation that language teachers do some self marketing, and there is plenty of evidence that this is happening; indeed to such an extent that is unreasonable. Marketing from the grassroots must be supported by high level support from the highest levels of government.

“Marketing of languages needs to be driven from above but also from grass roots. Languages teachers need some training in public relations and marketing techniques so that the exciting events etc that they take so much time over have a much wider and stronger impact on students, colleagues, parents and wider community. Simple pre and post surveys to all of these stakeholders; use of newsletters and local media; finding human interest “angles” on language and culture learning; etc.” ⁷⁵

“I am always told that I should promote LOTE. I disagree! Regular advertisements through the media and not from LOTE teachers themselves but from higher authorities would perhaps make the difference.” ⁷⁶

In supporting a multi-faceted media campaign, this report cautions on the use of publications, especially glossy, jargon-rich colour pamphlets. This is an easy deliverable for governments, but the effectiveness has to be questioned. A smart television or electronic media campaign is likely to have far greater impact.

The final word in this section is a plea from a Tasmanian language teacher.

“...[Australian should] engage in a large publicity campaign to shake up the monolingual mindset complacency about learning languages and about intercultural competency. It is just not good enough in a globalised world to grow up monolingually. Australians are missing out on learning one of the most vital skills for life. Monolingualism fosters narrow mindedness. Learning another language is the best way to gain intercultural competencies which include gaining a critical insight in one's own culture as well as in another culture. We need good intercultural communicators.” ⁷⁷

Recommendation 28

That MCEETYA support a nationwide media campaign to promote the value of languages education. This campaign should utilise the services of experienced and innovative marketing organisations, and have national, state and local elements.

⁷⁵ Teacher, WA

⁷⁶ Teacher, WA

⁷⁷ Teacher, Tasmania

Strand 7 – Parent partnerships (what the National Plan doesn't address)

The National Plan talks of the need to influence public opinion on language education, but it contains few strategies for engaging parents, except through an arms length media campaign. This is a huge omission, and if unaddressed will result in strategies and actions that lack a vital component. The strength of any change strategy must acknowledge that many parents seek active involvement in their children's education. To treat them as passive consumers of services undervalues the contribution that they can make.

Engaging parents at the school level to discuss language education must be an essential component of this plan. This kind of technique has been employed with values education and other national education initiatives.

The following results from the study give an insight into thinking on the issues around parent involvement.

Parent and student involvement in Languages education	Pa %	St %	LT %	P %	LA %	TL %
My school keeps parents well informed about issues involving Language study	31	30	43	53	11	6
If there were to be a change in the Languages offered at this school, I would expect parents would be consulted	76	NA	77	88	69	NA
If my school decided to change the Languages it teaches, students would be asked for their ideas and concerns	NA	44	NA	NA	NA	NA
Decisions about Languages should be left to school staff as they are the experts	28	19	52	45	35	33
My school involves parents in reviewing its Languages program	15	48	15	88	8	2

Table 43

Apart from the Principals who responded to the survey, all other groups believed that schools did not keep parents well informed about Languages issues. Whilst most would expect that parents be consulted about changes to Language programs, would this be a deep consultative process, or would it be simply giving some information after decisions had been made?

"I believe that parents are excluded from many decisions about education. The study of languages is just another example. In my experience parents are not given, as standard practice, information about developments in education, curriculum, government policies and priorities in education. Nor are they consulted in any systematic way about any of these matters. Parents have to rely on their own endeavours and research to find such information: whether it be by reading newspapers, on-line research,

participation in parent groups such P & F and APC or some other community or education groups.

This exclusion or non inclusivity is a real problem for education in general. There are a lot of written and verbal representations about parents and teachers working as a team with students, to enhance the students learning experience - but my experience is that this is not a team but an autocratic hierarchy where power is exercised by withholding information and limiting participation.”⁷⁸

The fact that around half of language teachers and principals believe that the school staff should make decisions about the Language curriculum, makes it seem likely that consultation would at best be superficial in many schools. As is common with other educational issues, parents are underestimated in relation to their desire to be involved in school decision making and in their ability to make considered judgments when properly informed. Parents can be wonderful allies in the process of educational change. Whilst the question to principals was slightly different from those of other groups in relation to involving parents in reviewing Languages, there is little to indicate in their responses that parents would play any significant role in this process.

Recommendation 29

The Plan should be adjusted to acknowledge and incorporate a significant level of parental involvement taking into account the fact that parents are significant stakeholders in the entire exercise of planning for change.

⁷⁸ Parent, WA

Responses to the Draft Report

This report was released in draft form in April 2007. It was placed on the ACSSO languages website and copies were sent to all Ministers of Education and government and non-government jurisdictions and authorities, as well to selected professional associations and individuals. Interested parties were invited to comment on the report as part of a validation exercise. These responses are published in Appendix 2. The responses are useful in that they provide a more detailed perspective from some of the organisational stakeholders.

The detailed response from the MCEETYA Task Force reinforces the general thrust of this report, which argues that there is a mismatch between the aspirations of the National Statement and the strategies employed within the National Plan. This report supports the work of the Task Force, in that it is realistically achieving all that it can within a framework resource constraint, Federal/State relationships and political compromise. Notwithstanding this, the report argues that the low levels of funding, and the “busy work” that typifies so many national education projects, as opposed to high level intervention, will not result in widespread systemic change.

This report acknowledges the various inputs into languages education as described in the responses from the officials from Victoria and NSW and the Tasmanian Education Minister. This information however does not change the overwhelming view that the overall picture of school language education is quite bleak, despite the various state level programs and initiatives and the scattered bright lights on the landscape.

Three responses were received from Catholic Education Authorities. One pointed out some of the limitations of this study, relating to its electronic nature and design. Yes, a complementary paper based survey may well have increased the sample size but the parent organisations had to operate within a very limited budget, without any specific external funding to support the project. And the study does acknowledge that most respondents were likely to have been favourably disposed to the importance of languages education. More importantly, the three submissions generally support the contention that governments need to provide significantly greater leadership and resources for the Catholic sector to be able to respond in the way it would want.

The study also thanks AHISA for its detailed and thoughtful response to the report draft, and commends it to readers. Just as a number of the AHISA member schools are strongly supportive of languages education and have a long history and culture of success in this area, so do a number of Catholic and Government Schools. The challenge for education in general is to spread

this culture and provide access to quality languages programs on a more universal basis.

Conclusion – is there a support base on which to build?

The answer to this question is unequivocally yes! Despite the picture of systemic neglect for languages education that this report has painted, there are many schools which are operating quality programs. There are many parents who understand the importance of languages for their children, and more broadly, for the country. There are students who love participating in language classes. There are many excellent language teachers. There are principals prepared to exercise bold leadership in supporting languages in their schools, even in the face of adversity. And most importantly we have nine education ministers who have expressed a positive vision for languages education in Australian schools.

The challenge now is turn the vision into a reality. Can Australia as a nation expect anything less of our educational leaders? Can we afford another decade of neglect?

Appendix 1

Quantitative data

Appendix 1A BASELINE PARTICIPATION DATA

Q2

I live in:

the ACT	171	4.32%
NSW	703	17.76%
the NT	42	1.06%
QLD	770	19.45%
SA	401	10.13%
TAS	240	6.06%
WA	663	16.75%
VIC	969	24.48%

Total 3959

Q3

My school or place of work is located in a:

Capital city	2373	59.97%
Major provincial centre	626	15.82%
Country town	693	17.51%
Small rural centre	200	5.05%
Remote or isolated area	65	1.64%

Total 3957

Q4

I am responding to this survey as a

Parent	724	18.30%
Student in Years 5-12	1181	29.85%
School Languages Teacher	1427	36.06%
School Principal	340	8.59%
Departmental/Authority Officer	128	3.23%
Tertiary Languages Educator	157	3.97%

Total 3957

Appendix 1B PARENT DATA

Q5		
Choose as many of the following statements which are true for your family:		
At least one parent/grandparent is from a non English speaking background	175	10.99%
We regularly speak a language other than English at home	75	4.71%
I study/have studied a language other than English	399	25.06%
We only speak English at home	471	29.59%
My child/children have studied a Language at their regular school	472	29.65%
Total	1592	

Q6		
Choose one or more of the following. My child/children attend (or recently attended):		
Government schools(s)	488	68.93%
Catholic school(s)	94	13.28%
Independent school(s)	126	17.80%
Total	708	

Q7		
Choose one or more of the following statements which are true for your child's school:		
Some subjects other than Languages (like social studies) are taught in the Language (this is called language immersion)	134	15.23%
Languages are taught separately from other subjects	513	58.30%
Special events such as Language Days, excursions and overseas trips are offered as part of the Languages course	233	26.48%
Total	880	

Q8		
Learning a language helps students understand the world around them		
Strongly Agree	344	54.17%
Agree	225	35.43%
Neutral	37	5.83%
Disagree	18	2.83%
Strongly Disagree	11	1.73%
Don't Know	0	0.00%
Total	635	

Q9		
Learning other languages is not particularly useful, because English is now spoken so widely around the world		
Strongly Agree	9	1.42%
Agree	47	7.42%
Neutral	45	7.11%
Disagree	203	32.07%
Strongly Disagree	328	51.82%
Don't Know	1	0.16%
Total	633	

Q10		
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Learning a language helps with learning English		
Strongly Agree	191	30.13%
Agree	223	35.17%
Neutral	101	15.93%
Disagree	74	11.67%
Strongly Disagree	28	4.42%
Don't Know	17	2.68%
Total	634	

Q11

Students who struggle with English should not have to learn another language		
Strongly Agree	44	6.94%
Agree	86	13.56%
Neutral	95	14.98%
Disagree	269	42.43%
Strongly Disagree	126	19.87%
Don't Know	14	2.21%
Total	634	

Q12

All students are capable of learning a Language		
Strongly Agree	173	27.46%
Agree	293	46.51%
Neutral	69	10.95%
Disagree	64	10.16%
Strongly Disagree	12	1.90%
Don't Know	19	3.02%
Total	630	

Q13

The best way to learn about another culture is through learning a Language		
Strongly Agree	144	22.68%
Agree	257	40.47%
Neutral	106	16.69%
Disagree	107	16.85%
Strongly Disagree	18	2.83%
Don't Know	3	0.47%
Total	635	

Q14

I believe that Languages are well taught in Australian schools		
Strongly Agree	13	2.06%
Agree	143	22.66%
Neutral	167	26.47%
Disagree	183	29.00%
Strongly Disagree	56	8.87%
Don't Know	69	10.94%
Total	631	

Q15

Language teachers are well respected in my child's school

Strongly Agree	86	13.61%
Agree	247	39.08%
Neutral	131	20.73%
Disagree	72	11.39%
Strongly Disagree	23	3.64%
Don't Know	73	11.55%

Total	632	
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Q16

Discipline in Language classes is not as good as in other classes

Strongly Agree	12	1.90%
Agree	86	13.61%
Neutral	117	18.51%
Disagree	190	30.06%
Strongly Disagree	74	11.71%
Don't Know	153	24.21%

Total	632	
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Q17

All of my child's Language teachers are well qualified

Strongly Agree	99	15.71%
Agree	219	34.76%
Neutral	105	16.67%
Disagree	40	6.35%
Strongly Disagree	9	1.43%
Don't Know	158	25.08%

Total	630	
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Q18

Learning languages is too hard

Strongly Agree	5	0.79%
Agree	24	3.78%
Neutral	61	9.61%
Disagree	305	48.03%
Strongly Disagree	233	36.69%
Don't Know	7	1.10%

Total	635	
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Q19

I would support my child in choosing to learn a Language

Strongly Agree	437	68.82%
Agree	183	28.82%
Neutral	7	1.10%
Disagree	4	0.63%
Strongly Disagree	4	0.63%
Don't Know	0	0.00%

Total	635	
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Q20

Language learning should be compulsory in every primary school

Strongly Agree	218	34.60%
Agree	203	32.22%
Neutral	84	13.33%
Disagree	82	13.02%
Strongly Disagree	38	6.03%
Don't Know	5	0.79%

Total 630**Q21**

Languages should be compulsory for all high school students in the junior years

Strongly Agree	209	33.33%
Agree	206	32.85%
Neutral	80	12.76%
Disagree	90	14.35%
Strongly Disagree	38	6.06%
Don't Know	4	0.64%

Total 627**Q22**

Language learning is often interrupted at my child's school because of a shortage of qualified teachers

Strongly Agree	61	9.65%
Agree	122	19.30%
Neutral	88	13.92%
Disagree	182	28.80%
Strongly Disagree	53	8.39%
Don't Know	126	19.94%

Total 632**Q23**

In my experience, Languages are well coordinated between primary and high school

Strongly Agree	10	1.58%
Agree	84	13.31%
Neutral	72	11.41%
Disagree	209	33.12%
Strongly Disagree	95	15.06%
Don't Know	161	25.52%

Total 631**Q24**

Language teaching is strong in my child's school

Strongly Agree	76	12.03%
Agree	215	34.02%
Neutral	121	19.15%
Disagree	120	18.99%
Strongly Disagree	57	9.02%
Don't Know	43	6.80%

Total		632
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Q25

Many Australian students think that learning a Language is not important

Strongly Agree	91	14.35%
Agree	325	51.26%
Neutral	67	10.57%
Disagree	49	7.73%
Strongly Disagree	6	0.95%
Don't Know	96	15.14%

Total		634
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Q26

Languages have a high profile in my child's school

Strongly Agree	68	10.78%
Agree	179	28.37%
Neutral	131	20.76%
Disagree	159	25.20%
Strongly Disagree	55	8.72%
Don't Know	39	6.18%

Total		631
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Q27

Languages hold a strong position in the curriculum in my State/Territory

Strongly Agree	11	1.74%
Agree	135	21.33%
Neutral	135	21.33%
Disagree	149	23.54%
Strongly Disagree	53	8.37%
Don't Know	150	23.70%

Total		633
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Q28

Many Australian parents do not see the importance of learning a Language

Strongly Agree	93	14.69%
Agree	323	51.03%
Neutral	83	13.11%
Disagree	49	7.74%
Strongly Disagree	2	0.32%
Don't Know	83	13.11%

Total		633
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Q29

Given Australia's geographic location, it makes more sense to learn an Asian rather than a European Language

Strongly Agree	70	11.13%
Agree	172	27.34%
Neutral	121	19.24%
Disagree	192	30.52%
Strongly Disagree	69	10.97%

Don't Know	5	0.79%
Total	629	

Q30

Learning a Language improves a child's future employment prospects

Strongly Agree	163	25.75%
Agree	307	48.50%
Neutral	85	13.43%
Disagree	51	8.06%
Strongly Disagree	17	2.69%
Don't Know	10	1.58%
Total	633	

Q31

Learning a Language should start in the early years of Primary school

Strongly Agree	305	48.03%
Agree	239	37.64%
Neutral	36	5.67%
Disagree	33	5.20%
Strongly Disagree	17	2.68%
Don't Know	5	0.79%
Total	635	

Q32

It is not too late to start the study of a new Language in high school

Strongly Agree	176	27.76%
Agree	358	56.47%
Neutral	41	6.47%
Disagree	40	6.31%
Strongly Disagree	8	1.26%
Don't Know	11	1.74%
Total	634	

Q33

Learning character based Languages such as Japanese, Chinese or Korean is too hard for most students

Strongly Agree	9	1.42%
Agree	85	13.41%
Neutral	116	18.30%
Disagree	263	41.48%
Strongly Disagree	87	13.72%
Don't Know	74	11.67%
Total	634	

Q34

My child's school keeps me well informed about issues involving Language study

Strongly Agree	32	5.06%
Agree	165	26.11%
Neutral	168	26.58%
Disagree	184	29.11%

Strongly Disagree	69	10.92%
Don't Know	14	2.22%
Total	632	

Q35

My child's school is very accommodating of different beliefs and cultures within its community

Strongly Agree	203	32.02%
Agree	307	48.42%
Neutral	90	14.20%
Disagree	19	3.00%
Strongly Disagree	4	0.63%
Don't Know	11	1.74%
Total	634	

Q36

If there were to be a change in the Languages offered at my child's school, I would expect to be consulted

Strongly Agree	234	37.03%
Agree	309	48.89%
Neutral	52	8.23%
Disagree	29	4.59%
Strongly Disagree	3	0.47%
Don't Know	5	0.79%
Total	632	

Q37

I prefer to leave curriculum decisions about Languages to the teaching staff of the school, as they are the experts

Strongly Agree	23	3.64%
Agree	150	23.73%
Neutral	92	14.56%
Disagree	273	43.20%
Strongly Disagree	89	14.08%
Don't Know	5	0.79%
Total	632	

Q38

Learning a Language can improve a child's self-esteem

Strongly Agree	174	27.44%
Agree	313	49.37%
Neutral	88	13.88%
Disagree	30	4.73%
Strongly Disagree	13	2.05%
Don't Know	16	2.52%
Total	634	

Q39

The term "intercultural language learning" has little meaning for me

Strongly Agree	49	7.75%
Agree	248	39.24%

Neutral	95	15.03%
Disagree	167	26.42%
Strongly Disagree	54	8.54%
Don't Know	19	3.01%
Total	632	

Q40

I believe that studying a Language other than English will benefit my child later in life

Strongly Agree	296	46.76%
Agree	246	38.86%
Neutral	44	6.95%
Disagree	27	4.27%
Strongly Disagree	17	2.69%
Don't Know	3	0.47%
Total	633	

Q41

My child's school allocates sufficient time to Language classes

Strongly Agree	45	7.12%
Agree	207	32.75%
Neutral	130	20.57%
Disagree	118	18.67%
Strongly Disagree	52	8.23%
Don't Know	80	12.66%
Total	632	

Q42

Although Languages is one of the 8 core curriculum areas in schools, it is often "eighth in name, eighth in delivery and eighth in priority"

Strongly Agree	105	16.64%
Agree	230	36.45%
Neutral	107	16.96%
Disagree	68	10.78%
Strongly Disagree	12	1.90%
Don't Know	109	17.27%
Total	631	

Q43

Australian schools should reduce the number of Languages on offer in order to improve learning continuity between schools and the supply of teachers

Strongly Agree	47	7.41%
Agree	136	21.45%
Neutral	128	20.19%
Disagree	199	31.39%
Strongly Disagree	50	7.89%
Don't Know	74	11.67%
Total	634	

Q44

My child's school principal is highly committed to the school's Languages program		
Strongly Agree	89	14.10%
Agree	193	30.59%
Neutral	133	21.08%
Disagree	43	6.81%
Strongly Disagree	28	4.44%
Don't Know	145	22.98%
Total	631	

Q45

Australians as a people do not seem very interested in learning other Languages		
Strongly Agree	84	13.29%
Agree	330	52.22%
Neutral	85	13.45%
Disagree	92	14.56%
Strongly Disagree	7	1.11%
Don't Know	34	5.38%
Total	632	

Q46

My child finds the study of Languages stimulating		
Strongly Agree	175	27.60%
Agree	278	43.85%
Neutral	76	11.99%
Disagree	61	9.62%
Strongly Disagree	23	3.63%
Don't Know	21	3.31%
Total	634	

Q47

The Education Department/Office in my state/territory provides strong leadership and commitment to Language education programs		
Strongly Agree	12	1.90%
Agree	74	11.71%
Neutral	141	22.31%
Disagree	119	18.83%
Strongly Disagree	44	6.96%
Don't Know	242	38.29%
Total	632	

Q48

The Language learning program in my child's school is provided over a semester only, and hinders consistency in my child's language progress		
Strongly Agree	15	2.37%
Agree	49	7.74%
Neutral	82	12.95%
Disagree	240	37.91%
Strongly Disagree	156	24.64%
Don't Know	91	14.38%
Total	633	

Q49

I am concerned that only around 10% of Australian Year 12 students study a Language other than English

Strongly Agree	120	19.11%
Agree	194	30.89%
Neutral	137	21.82%
Disagree	109	17.36%
Strongly Disagree	45	7.17%
Don't Know	23	3.66%
Total	628	

Q50

I am aware of the National Statement and Plan for Languages Education in Schools 2005-2008

Strongly Agree	30	4.75%
Agree	81	12.84%
Neutral	59	9.35%
Disagree	181	28.68%
Strongly Disagree	118	18.70%
Don't Know	162	25.67%
Total	631	

Q51

I am confident that the Commonwealth and the States will provide sufficient resources to fully implement the National Plan

Strongly Agree	6	0.95%
Agree	41	6.48%
Neutral	99	15.64%
Disagree	185	29.23%
Strongly Disagree	127	20.06%
Don't Know	175	27.65%
Total	633	

Q52

My child's school regularly reviews its Languages programs to assess their effectiveness

Strongly Agree	22	3.49%
Agree	124	19.68%
Neutral	94	14.92%
Disagree	82	13.02%
Strongly Disagree	46	7.30%
Don't Know	262	41.59%
Total	630	

Q53

My child has had the opportunity of having native speakers being involved in his/her Language classes

Strongly Agree	108	17.06%
Agree	214	33.81%
Neutral	56	8.85%
Disagree	110	17.38%
Strongly Disagree	45	7.11%
Don't Know	100	15.80%

Total		633
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Q54

My child's school involves parents in reviewing its Languages program

Strongly Agree	22	3.48%
Agree	75	11.87%
Neutral	101	15.98%
Disagree	217	34.34%
Strongly Disagree	77	12.18%
Don't Know	140	22.15%
Total	632	

Q55

Australian people generally think that Languages are an important part of the school curriculum

Strongly Agree	7	1.11%
Agree	88	13.95%
Neutral	136	21.55%
Disagree	265	42.00%
Strongly Disagree	68	10.78%
Don't Know	67	10.62%
Total	631	

Q56

Studying another Language can be confusing for children, especially those with poor English skills

Strongly Agree	28	4.42%
Agree	112	17.69%
Neutral	76	12.01%
Disagree	262	41.39%
Strongly Disagree	125	19.75%
Don't Know	30	4.74%
Total	633	

Q57

To the best of my knowledge, Language teacher training courses are of good quality in Australian universities

Strongly Agree	22	3.48%
Agree	206	32.59%
Neutral	92	14.56%
Disagree	36	5.70%
Strongly Disagree	14	2.22%
Don't Know	262	41.46%
Total	632	

Q58

Learning Languages broadens students' minds to the wider civilization of the world

Strongly Agree	300	47.39%
Agree	267	42.18%
Neutral	36	5.69%
Disagree	20	3.16%

Strongly Disagree	8	1.26%
Don't Know	2	0.32%
Total	633	

Q59

My child's progress in Languages is reported on as thoroughly as it is in other core subjects
(including parent/teacher interview opportunities)

Strongly Agree	134	21.20%
Agree	230	36.39%
Neutral	79	12.50%
Disagree	117	18.51%
Strongly Disagree	36	5.70%
Don't Know	36	5.70%
Total	632	

Q60

Special needs students should be withdrawn or exempted from Language classes

Strongly Agree	30	4.73%
Agree	69	10.88%
Neutral	128	20.19%
Disagree	248	39.12%
Strongly Disagree	101	15.93%
Don't Know	58	9.15%
Total	634	

Q61

I talk to my child less about their Language learning than about their other subjects

Strongly Agree	33	5.21%
Agree	157	24.80%
Neutral	80	12.64%
Disagree	257	40.60%
Strongly Disagree	88	13.90%
Don't Know	18	2.84%
Total	633	

Q62

Rate your overall level of satisfaction with the quality of the school Language program experienced by your child

Very Satisfied	160	25.12%
Somewhat Satisfied	221	34.69%
Neutral	74	11.62%
Somewhat Dissatisfied	84	13.19%
Very Dissatisfied	65	10.20%
Not Applicable	33	5.18%
Total	637	

Appendix 1C STUDENT DATA

Q64

Choose as many of the following statements which are true for you and your family

At least one of my parents or grandparents is from a non English speaking background	333	14.38%
I would like to study a Language other than English	444	19.18%
We regularly speak a Language other than English at home	194	8.38%
I study/have studied a Language other than English at my regular school	717	30.97%
We only speak English at home	627	27.08%

Total **2315**

Q65

My Year level at school is:

Year 5	134	13.87%
Year 6	105	10.87%
Year 7	185	19.15%
Year 8	187	19.36%
Year 9	163	16.87%
Year 10	105	10.87%
Year 11	44	4.55%
Year 12	43	4.45%

Total **966**

Q66

I am:

Male	427	44.20%
Female	539	55.80%

Total **966**

Q67

I attend a:

Government school	506	52.38%
Catholic school	200	20.70%
Independent school	260	26.92%

Total **966**

Q68

Choose one or more of the following statements which are true for you and your school:

Some subjects other than Languages (like social studies) are taught in the language (this is called language immersion)	197	14.30%
I learn a Language separately from my other subjects	718	52.10%
I don't study a Language at the moment	37	2.69%
Special events such a Language Days, excursions and overseas trips are offered as part of the Languages course	426	30.91%

Total **1378**

Q69

Learning a language helps me understand the world that I live in		
Strongly Agree	172	17.86%
Agree	388	40.29%
Neutral	218	22.64%
Disagree	77	8.00%
Strongly Disagree	52	5.40%
Don't Know	56	5.82%
Total	963	

Q70

Learning Languages is too hard		
Strongly Agree	80	8.34%
Agree	116	12.10%
Neutral	251	26.17%
Disagree	319	33.26%
Strongly Disagree	171	17.83%
Don't Know	22	2.29%
Total	959	

Q71

Learning Languages is popular with students at my school		
Strongly Agree	56	5.83%
Agree	181	18.85%
Neutral	262	27.29%
Disagree	237	24.69%
Strongly Disagree	144	15.00%
Don't Know	80	8.33%
Total	960	

Q72

Learning Languages is fun		
Strongly Agree	146	15.19%
Agree	318	33.09%
Neutral	255	26.53%
Disagree	104	10.82%
Strongly Disagree	122	12.70%
Don't Know	16	1.66%
Total	961	

Q73

Girls are better at learning Languages than boys		
Strongly Agree	158	16.51%
Agree	169	17.66%
Neutral	226	23.62%
Disagree	130	13.58%
Strongly Disagree	127	13.27%
Don't Know	147	15.36%
Total	957	

Q74

My Language teacher uses computers and the internet in my classes

Strongly Agree	126	13.15%
Agree	302	31.52%
Neutral	199	20.77%
Disagree	152	15.87%
Strongly Disagree	125	13.05%
Don't Know	54	5.64%

Total 958**Q75**

Successful people can speak more than one Language

Strongly Agree	120	12.55%
Agree	284	29.71%
Neutral	228	23.85%
Disagree	153	16.00%
Strongly Disagree	91	9.52%
Don't Know	80	8.37%

Total 956**Q76**

Studying other Languages is a waste of time, because English is now spoken so widely around the world

Strongly Agree	81	8.46%
Agree	85	8.88%
Neutral	133	13.90%
Disagree	296	30.93%
Strongly Disagree	338	35.32%
Don't Know	24	2.51%

Total 957**Q77**

Learning a Language is helping me to understand how English works

Strongly Agree	122	12.84%
Agree	261	27.47%
Neutral	191	20.11%
Disagree	219	23.05%
Strongly Disagree	99	10.42%
Don't Know	58	6.11%

Total 950**Q78**

Students who struggle with English should not have to learn another Language

Strongly Agree	127	13.27%
Agree	185	19.33%
Neutral	206	21.53%
Disagree	280	29.26%
Strongly Disagree	103	10.76%
Don't Know	56	5.85%

Total **957**

Q79

Native speakers of the Language I am learning have visited my Language class at school

Strongly Agree	218	22.78%
Agree	271	28.32%
Neutral	111	11.60%
Disagree	141	14.73%
Strongly Disagree	107	11.18%
Don't Know	109	11.39%

Total **957**

Q80

The best way to learn about another country and its culture is through learning a Language

Strongly Agree	169	17.59%
Agree	399	41.52%
Neutral	209	21.75%
Disagree	101	10.51%
Strongly Disagree	49	5.10%
Don't Know	34	3.54%

Total **961**

Q81

I believe that Languages are well taught in my school

Strongly Agree	220	22.96%
Agree	392	40.92%
Neutral	196	20.46%
Disagree	60	6.26%
Strongly Disagree	64	6.68%
Don't Know	26	2.71%

Total **958**

Q82

I respect my Language teacher

Strongly Agree	336	34.89%
Agree	326	33.85%
Neutral	147	15.26%
Disagree	37	3.84%
Strongly Disagree	86	8.93%
Don't Know	31	3.22%

Total **963**

Q83

Children "muck up" more in Language classes than in other classes

Strongly Agree	229	24.03%
Agree	240	25.18%
Neutral	217	22.77%
Disagree	161	16.89%
Strongly Disagree	58	6.09%

Don't Know	48	5.04%
Total	953	

Q84

Learning Asian Languages is more important than learning European Languages for Australians

Strongly Agree	56	5.89%
Agree	84	8.83%
Neutral	219	23.03%
Disagree	240	25.24%
Strongly Disagree	184	19.35%
Don't Know	168	17.67%
Total	951	

Q85

Learning a Language should be compulsory for every primary school child

Strongly Agree	125	13.09%
Agree	273	28.59%
Neutral	197	20.63%
Disagree	177	18.53%
Strongly Disagree	126	13.19%
Don't Know	57	5.97%
Total	955	

Q86

Languages should be compulsory for all high school students in the junior years

Strongly Agree	137	14.36%
Agree	267	27.99%
Neutral	209	21.91%
Disagree	151	15.83%
Strongly Disagree	128	13.42%
Don't Know	62	6.50%
Total	954	

Q87

When my Language teacher is away, their replacement is usually not another Language teacher

Strongly Agree	243	25.37%
Agree	290	30.27%
Neutral	183	19.10%
Disagree	124	12.94%
Strongly Disagree	56	5.85%
Don't Know	62	6.47%
Total	958	

Q88

In my experience, the Language I learnt at primary school continued on to my secondary school

Strongly Agree	162	16.96%
Agree	229	23.98%
Neutral	114	11.94%
Disagree	129	13.51%

Strongly Disagree	150	15.71%
Don't Know	171	17.91%
Total	955	

Q89

Most Australian students think that learning a Language is important

Strongly Agree	49	5.11%
Agree	175	18.27%
Neutral	273	28.50%
Disagree	212	22.13%
Strongly Disagree	95	9.92%
Don't Know	154	16.08%
Total	958	

Q90

My parents don't talk to me about my Language learning as much as they do my other subjects

Strongly Agree	220	22.99%
Agree	297	31.03%
Neutral	159	16.61%
Disagree	168	17.55%
Strongly Disagree	80	8.36%
Don't Know	33	3.45%
Total	957	

Q91

Learning a Language could help me get a job when I leave school

Strongly Agree	264	27.70%
Agree	363	38.09%
Neutral	155	16.26%
Disagree	61	6.40%
Strongly Disagree	56	5.88%
Don't Know	54	5.67%
Total	953	

Q92

Learning a Language should start in the early years of Primary school

Strongly Agree	200	20.86%
Agree	332	34.62%
Neutral	164	17.10%
Disagree	125	13.03%
Strongly Disagree	97	10.11%
Don't Know	41	4.28%
Total	959	

Q93

It is not too late to start the study of a new Language in high school

Strongly Agree	241	25.13%
Agree	388	40.46%
Neutral	149	15.54%

Disagree	77	8.03%
Strongly Disagree	63	6.57%
Don't Know	41	4.28%
Total	959	

Q94

Learning character based Languages such as Japanese, Chinese or Korean is too hard for most students

Strongly Agree	154	16.02%
Agree	223	23.20%
Neutral	221	23.00%
Disagree	174	18.11%
Strongly Disagree	68	7.08%
Don't Know	121	12.59%
Total	961	

Q95

My school keeps my parents well informed about what I do in Language classes

Strongly Agree	88	9.21%
Agree	195	20.40%
Neutral	232	24.27%
Disagree	224	23.43%
Strongly Disagree	131	13.70%
Don't Know	86	9.00%
Total	956	

Q96

Students at my school respect the different beliefs and cultures of other students

Strongly Agree	142	14.81%
Agree	354	36.91%
Neutral	242	25.23%
Disagree	89	9.28%
Strongly Disagree	55	5.74%
Don't Know	77	8.03%
Total	959	

Q97

If my school decided to change the Languages it teaches, students would be asked for their ideas and concerns

Strongly Agree	150	15.63%
Agree	274	28.54%
Neutral	198	20.63%
Disagree	100	10.42%
Strongly Disagree	64	6.67%
Don't Know	174	18.13%
Total	960	

Q98

Decisions about Languages should be left to teachers as they are the experts

Strongly Agree	48	5.02%
Agree	136	14.23%
Neutral	225	23.54%
Disagree	274	28.66%
Strongly Disagree	209	21.86%
Don't Know	64	6.69%
Total	956	

Q99

Learning a Language has helped me become a more confident person

Strongly Agree	122	12.80%
Agree	237	24.87%
Neutral	245	25.71%
Disagree	173	18.15%
Strongly Disagree	120	12.59%
Don't Know	56	5.88%
Total	953	

Q100

I believe that studying a Language other than English will benefit me later in life

Strongly Agree	287	29.90%
Agree	327	34.06%
Neutral	163	16.98%
Disagree	65	6.77%
Strongly Disagree	61	6.35%
Don't Know	57	5.94%
Total	960	

Q101

I can't study a Language well because there is not enough time allocated to this subject in the weekly timetable

Strongly Agree	67	7.00%
Agree	152	15.88%
Neutral	221	23.09%
Disagree	300	31.35%
Strongly Disagree	151	15.78%
Don't Know	66	6.90%
Total	957	

Q102

I would make better progress in learning a Language if it was for a full year rather than over a semester

Strongly Agree	168	17.63%
Agree	246	25.81%
Neutral	209	21.93%
Disagree	69	7.24%
Strongly Disagree	87	9.13%
Don't Know	174	18.26%
Total	953	

Q103

Language classes, more than other classes, are interrupted or cancelled due to other school activities

Strongly Agree	80	8.34%
Agree	158	16.48%
Neutral	219	22.84%
Disagree	248	25.86%
Strongly Disagree	135	14.08%
Don't Know	119	12.41%

Total **959**

Q104

Although Language is one of the 8 curriculum areas (such as English and Maths) at my school, it is less important than other subjects

Strongly Agree	131	13.65%
Agree	221	23.02%
Neutral	203	21.15%
Disagree	211	21.98%
Strongly Disagree	104	10.83%
Don't Know	90	9.38%

Total **960**

Q105

My Principal strongly supports the Languages program at my school

Strongly Agree	171	17.79%
Agree	261	27.16%
Neutral	184	19.15%
Disagree	59	6.14%
Strongly Disagree	55	5.72%
Don't Know	231	24.04%

Total **961**

Q106

Australians as a people do not seem very interested in learning other Languages

Strongly Agree	108	11.31%
Agree	231	24.19%
Neutral	269	28.17%
Disagree	130	13.61%
Strongly Disagree	36	3.77%
Don't Know	181	18.95%

Total **955**

Q107

I think that Australians should be concerned that only around 10% of Australian Year 12 students study a Language other than English

Strongly Agree	141	14.70%
Agree	264	27.53%
Neutral	241	25.13%
Disagree	114	11.89%

Strongly Disagree	81	8.45%
Don't Know	118	12.30%
Total	959	

Q108

If my school was going to make changes to its Languages program, it would involve parents and students to help it make decisions

Strongly Agree	184	19.15%
Agree	273	28.41%
Neutral	179	18.63%
Disagree	100	10.41%
Strongly Disagree	62	6.45%
Don't Know	163	16.96%
Total	961	

Q109

Overall, I would rate my satisfaction level with learning a Language at my school as being:

Very Satisfied	285	29.50%
Somewhat Satisfied	328	33.95%
Neutral	196	20.29%
Somewhat Dissatisfied	61	6.31%
Very Dissatisfied	62	6.42%
Not applicable	34	3.52%
Total	966	

Appendix 1D LANGUAGE TEACHER DATA

Q111

I teach in a:			
Government school	758	64.02%	
Catholic school	133	11.23%	
Independent school	293	24.75%	
Total	1184		

Q112

I teach classes at the:			
Primary School level	309	26.10%	
Secondary School level	723	61.06%	
Primary and Secondary levels	152	12.84%	
Total	1184		

Q113

My teaching area is in:			
Asian languages	481	40.97%	
European languages	584	49.74%	
Both Asian and European languages	109	9.28%	
Total	1174		

Q114

Choose as many of the following statements which are true for you and your Language teaching program:

I only teach Languages	645	30.94%	
I teach several subjects in a full language immersion program	30	1.44%	
I teach other subjects as well as Languages	532	25.52%	
I introduce aspects of my Language teaching into my "non-language" classes	283	13.57%	
Special events such a Language Days, excursions and overseas trips are offered as part of the Languages course	595	28.54%	
Total	2085		

Q115

Learning a Language helps students understand the world around them

Strongly Agree	1022	86.46%	
Agree	147	12.44%	
Neutral	7	0.59%	
Disagree	2	0.17%	
Strongly Disagree	2	0.17%	
Don't Know	2	0.17%	
Total	1182		

Q116

It is hard to convince people that studying other Languages is useful, because English is now spoken so widely around the world

Strongly Agree	315	26.63%
Agree	574	48.52%
Neutral	95	8.03%
Disagree	150	12.68%
Strongly Disagree	45	3.80%
Don't Know	4	0.34%
Total	1183	

Q117

Learning a Language helps with learning English

Strongly Agree	880	74.83%
Agree	270	22.96%
Neutral	20	1.70%
Disagree	3	0.26%
Strongly Disagree	2	0.17%
Don't Know	1	0.09%
Total	1176	

Q118

Students who struggle with English should not have to learn another Language

Strongly Agree	24	2.04%
Agree	88	7.48%
Neutral	135	11.47%
Disagree	488	41.46%
Strongly Disagree	439	37.30%
Don't Know	3	0.25%
Total	1177	

Q119

All students are capable of learning a Language

Strongly Agree	463	39.34%
Agree	540	45.88%
Neutral	78	6.63%
Disagree	77	6.54%
Strongly Disagree	11	0.93%
Don't Know	8	0.68%
Total	1177	

Q120

The best way to learn about another culture is through learning a Language

Strongly Agree	611	51.78%
Agree	443	37.54%
Neutral	82	6.95%
Disagree	39	3.31%
Strongly Disagree	3	0.25%
Don't Know	2	0.17%
Total	1180	

Q121

Generally speaking, I believe that Languages are well taught in Australian schools		
Strongly Agree	69	5.85%
Agree	502	42.54%
Neutral	264	22.37%
Disagree	249	21.10%
Strongly Disagree	47	3.98%
Don't Know	49	4.15%
Total	1180	

Q122

My school community respects Language teachers		
Strongly Agree	186	15.78%
Agree	515	43.68%
Neutral	237	20.10%
Disagree	173	14.67%
Strongly Disagree	49	4.16%
Don't Know	19	1.61%
Total	1179	

Q123

Keeping students motivated and on task is a common difficulty for Language teachers		
Strongly Agree	270	22.88%
Agree	557	47.20%
Neutral	106	8.98%
Disagree	208	17.63%
Strongly Disagree	35	2.97%
Don't Know	4	0.34%
Total	1180	

Q124

Some Language teachers in my state are poorly qualified		
Strongly Agree	134	11.36%
Agree	470	39.83%
Neutral	238	20.17%
Disagree	149	12.63%
Strongly Disagree	18	1.53%
Don't Know	171	14.49%
Total	1180	

Q125

Asian Languages are more relevant than European Languages for Australian children		
Strongly Agree	105	8.94%
Agree	154	13.12%
Neutral	204	17.38%
Disagree	427	36.37%
Strongly Disagree	275	23.42%
Don't Know	9	0.77%
Total	1174	

Q126

Discipline in Language classes is good at my school

Strongly Agree	323	27.42%
Agree	580	49.24%
Neutral	137	11.63%
Disagree	105	8.91%
Strongly Disagree	28	2.38%
Don't Know	5	0.42%

Total 1178**Q127**

I find that girls are more proficient at learning Languages than boys

Strongly Agree	78	6.65%
Agree	323	27.54%
Neutral	241	20.55%
Disagree	419	35.72%
Strongly Disagree	76	6.48%
Don't Know	36	3.07%

Total 1173**Q128**

Morale is high amongst my Language teaching colleagues regarding the future of Language learning

Strongly Agree	68	5.77%
Agree	292	24.79%
Neutral	231	19.61%
Disagree	371	31.49%
Strongly Disagree	169	14.35%
Don't Know	47	3.99%

Total 1178**Q129**

Access to good quality ICT is a problem for Language teaching

Strongly Agree	230	19.49%
Agree	464	39.32%
Neutral	151	12.80%
Disagree	263	22.29%
Strongly Disagree	43	3.64%
Don't Know	29	2.46%

Total 1180**Q130**

The internet lacks relevant content for use during lessons in my Language classes

Strongly Agree	66	5.59%
Agree	220	18.64%
Neutral	193	16.36%
Disagree	511	43.31%
Strongly Disagree	156	13.22%
Don't Know	34	2.88%

Total 1180

Q131

I am convinced of the value of ICT as an appropriate tool for learning Languages

Strongly Agree	427	36.22%
Agree	551	46.73%
Neutral	130	11.03%
Disagree	45	3.82%
Strongly Disagree	8	0.68%
Don't Know	18	1.53%

Total 1179**Q132**

I am overwhelmed with work

Strongly Agree	278	23.60%
Agree	442	37.52%
Neutral	235	19.95%
Disagree	208	17.66%
Strongly Disagree	14	1.19%
Don't Know	1	0.08%

Total 1178**Q133**

I am struggling to effectively educate students about intercultural knowledge

Strongly Agree	57	4.83%
Agree	261	22.14%
Neutral	209	17.73%
Disagree	532	45.12%
Strongly Disagree	118	10.01%
Don't Know	2	0.17%

Total 1179**Q134**

The main reason students are learning Languages is to increase their future career opportunities

Strongly Agree	47	3.98%
Agree	318	26.95%
Neutral	231	19.58%
Disagree	484	41.02%
Strongly Disagree	63	5.34%
Don't Know	37	3.14%

Total 1180**Q135**

Learning Languages broadens students minds to the wider civilisation of the world

Strongly Agree	862	73.36%
Agree	301	25.62%
Neutral	7	0.60%
Disagree	2	0.17%
Strongly Disagree	2	0.17%
Don't Know	1	0.09%

Total	1175
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Q136

I would be happy for my own children to learn a Language at the school where I teach

Strongly Agree	777	65.90%
Agree	272	23.07%
Neutral	56	4.75%
Disagree	40	3.39%
Strongly Disagree	20	1.70%
Don't Know	14	1.19%

Total	1179
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Q137

Language learning should be compulsory in every primary school

Strongly Agree	661	56.30%
Agree	292	24.87%
Neutral	115	9.80%
Disagree	74	6.30%
Strongly Disagree	28	2.39%
Don't Know	4	0.34%

Total	1174
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Q138

Languages should be compulsory for all high school students in the junior years

Strongly Agree	690	58.62%
Agree	305	25.91%
Neutral	74	6.29%
Disagree	87	7.39%
Strongly Disagree	15	1.27%
Don't Know	6	0.51%

Total	1177
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Q139

Language learning is often interrupted because of a shortage of qualified teachers

Strongly Agree	327	27.81%
Agree	496	42.18%
Neutral	143	12.16%
Disagree	91	7.74%
Strongly Disagree	19	1.62%
Don't Know	100	8.50%

Total	1176
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Q140

Languages are well coordinated between primary and high schools in my area

Strongly Agree	42	3.57%
Agree	235	19.98%
Neutral	163	13.86%
Disagree	424	36.05%
Strongly Disagree	257	21.85%

Don't Know	55	4.68%
Total	1176	

Q141

Language teaching is well resourced in my school

Strongly Agree	262	22.34%
Agree	495	42.20%
Neutral	162	13.81%
Disagree	205	17.48%
Strongly Disagree	48	4.09%
Don't Know	1	0.09%
Total	1173	

Q142

Many Australian students see little relevance in learning a Language

Strongly Agree	313	26.57%
Agree	581	49.32%
Neutral	123	10.44%
Disagree	123	10.44%
Strongly Disagree	11	0.93%
Don't Know	27	2.29%
Total	1178	

Q143

Languages have a high profile in my school

Strongly Agree	142	12.06%
Agree	399	33.90%
Neutral	248	21.07%
Disagree	303	25.74%
Strongly Disagree	82	6.97%
Don't Know	3	0.25%
Total	1177	

Q144

Language teaching holds a strong position in my State/Territory curriculum

Strongly Agree	33	2.80%
Agree	296	25.15%
Neutral	292	24.81%
Disagree	384	32.63%
Strongly Disagree	108	9.18%
Don't Know	64	5.44%
Total	1177	

Q145

Many Australian parents do not see the relevance for their children of learning a Language

Strongly Agree	323	27.35%
Agree	574	48.60%
Neutral	129	10.92%
Disagree	116	9.82%

Strongly Disagree	9	0.76%
Don't Know	30	2.54%
Total	1181	

Q146

Learning a Language should start in the early years of Primary school

Strongly Agree	620	52.81%
Agree	364	31.01%
Neutral	85	7.24%
Disagree	71	6.05%
Strongly Disagree	25	2.13%
Don't Know	9	0.77%
Total	1174	

Q147

It is not too late to start the study of a new Language in high school

Strongly Agree	604	51.19%
Agree	479	40.59%
Neutral	37	3.14%
Disagree	48	4.07%
Strongly Disagree	8	0.68%
Don't Know	4	0.34%
Total	1180	

Q148

Learning character based Languages such as Japanese, Chinese or Korean is too hard for most students

Strongly Agree	49	4.16%
Agree	151	12.83%
Neutral	201	17.08%
Disagree	439	37.30%
Strongly Disagree	244	20.73%
Don't Know	93	7.90%
Total	1177	

Q149

My school keeps parents well informed about issues involving Language study

Strongly Agree	93	7.89%
Agree	416	35.28%
Neutral	288	24.43%
Disagree	298	25.28%
Strongly Disagree	67	5.68%
Don't Know	17	1.44%
Total	1179	

Q150

My school is very accommodating of different beliefs and cultures within its community

Strongly Agree	345	29.31%
Agree	524	44.52%
Neutral	205	17.42%

Disagree	76	6.46%
Strongly Disagree	16	1.36%
Don't Know	11	0.93%
Total	1177	

Q151

If there were to be a change in the Languages offered at this school,
I would expect parents would be consulted

Strongly Agree	352	29.91%
Agree	550	46.73%
Neutral	127	10.79%
Disagree	98	8.33%
Strongly Disagree	21	1.78%
Don't Know	29	2.46%
Total	1177	

Q152

Curriculum decisions are best left to the teaching staff of the school, as they are the experts

Strongly Agree	180	15.32%
Agree	428	36.43%
Neutral	272	23.15%
Disagree	243	20.68%
Strongly Disagree	35	2.98%
Don't Know	17	1.45%
Total	1175	

Q153

Learning a Language can improve a child's self-esteem

Strongly Agree	573	48.81%
Agree	509	43.36%
Neutral	71	6.05%
Disagree	5	0.43%
Strongly Disagree	1	0.09%
Don't Know	15	1.28%
Total	1174	

Q154

The term "intercultural language learning" is probably not well understood by parents

Strongly Agree	417	35.58%
Agree	642	54.78%
Neutral	65	5.55%
Disagree	21	1.79%
Strongly Disagree	0	0.00%
Don't Know	27	2.30%
Total	1172	

Q155

I believe that studying a Language other than English will benefit children later in life

Strongly Agree	847	72.46%
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Agree	305	26.09%
Neutral	13	1.11%
Disagree	2	0.17%
Strongly Disagree	1	0.09%
Don't Know	1	0.09%

Total **1169**

Q156

My school allocates sufficient time for students to properly learn a Language

Strongly Agree	151	12.86%
Agree	384	32.71%
Neutral	151	12.86%
Disagree	336	28.62%
Strongly Disagree	149	12.69%
Don't Know	3	0.26%

Total **1174**

Q157

Although Language is one of the 8 core curriculum areas in schools, it is often "eighth in name, eighth in delivery and eighth in priority"

Strongly Agree	510	43.37%
Agree	429	36.48%
Neutral	101	8.59%
Disagree	96	8.16%
Strongly Disagree	20	1.70%
Don't Know	20	1.70%

Total **1176**

Q158

Australian schools should reduce the number of Languages on offer in order to improve learning continuity between schools and the supply of teachers

Strongly Agree	93	7.89%
Agree	200	16.96%
Neutral	273	23.16%
Disagree	418	35.45%
Strongly Disagree	157	13.32%
Don't Know	38	3.22%

Total **1179**

Q159

My school principal is highly committed to the school's Languages program

Strongly Agree	293	24.89%
Agree	440	37.38%
Neutral	213	18.10%
Disagree	137	11.64%
Strongly Disagree	60	5.10%
Don't Know	34	2.89%

Total **1177**

Q160

Australians as a people do not seem very interested in learning other Languages		
Strongly Agree	281	23.94%
Agree	579	49.32%
Neutral	129	10.99%
Disagree	153	13.03%
Strongly Disagree	11	0.94%
Don't Know	21	1.79%
Total	1174	

Q161

In my experience, children find the study of Languages stimulating		
Strongly Agree	230	19.57%
Agree	662	56.34%
Neutral	203	17.28%
Disagree	74	6.30%
Strongly Disagree	4	0.34%
Don't Know	2	0.17%
Total	1175	

Q162

The Education Department/Education Office in my state/territory provides strong leadership and commitment to Language education programs		
Strongly Agree	62	5.27%
Agree	322	27.36%
Neutral	325	27.61%
Disagree	288	24.47%
Strongly Disagree	105	8.92%
Don't Know	75	6.37%
Total	1177	

Q163

I am concerned that only around 10% of Australian Year 12 students study a Language other than English		
Strongly Agree	604	51.19%
Agree	437	37.03%
Neutral	83	7.03%
Disagree	34	2.88%
Strongly Disagree	4	0.34%
Don't Know	18	1.53%
Total	1180	

Q164

I am aware of the National Statement and Plan for Languages Education in Schools 2005-2008		
Strongly Agree	260	22.22%
Agree	448	38.29%
Neutral	141	12.05%
Disagree	138	11.79%
Strongly Disagree	55	4.70%
Don't Know	128	10.94%
Total	1170	

Q165

I am confident that the Commonwealth and the States will provide sufficient resources to fully implement the National Plan

Strongly Agree	25	2.12%
Agree	124	10.53%
Neutral	287	24.36%
Disagree	375	31.83%
Strongly Disagree	187	15.87%
Don't Know	180	15.28%
Total	1178	

Q166

My school regularly reviews its Languages programs to assess their effectiveness

Strongly Agree	190	16.14%
Agree	482	40.95%
Neutral	192	16.31%
Disagree	224	19.03%
Strongly Disagree	48	4.08%
Don't Know	41	3.48%
Total	1177	

Q167

Schools in my State/Territory regularly review their Language programs to ensure their continuing effectiveness

Strongly Agree	42	3.57%
Agree	271	23.06%
Neutral	288	24.51%
Disagree	200	17.02%
Strongly Disagree	46	3.91%
Don't Know	328	27.91%
Total	1175	

Q168

My school involves parents in reviewing its Languages programs

Strongly Agree	28	2.39%
Agree	150	12.82%
Neutral	202	17.26%
Disagree	538	45.98%
Strongly Disagree	146	12.48%
Don't Know	106	9.06%
Total	1170	

Q169

I involve native speakers in my Language classes

Strongly Agree	353	30.07%
Agree	495	42.16%
Neutral	155	13.20%
Disagree	121	10.31%

Strongly Disagree	44	3.75%
Don't Know	6	0.51%
Total	1174	

Q170

Studying another Language can be confusing for some children, especially those who have limited English literacy skills

Strongly Agree	61	5.17%
Agree	321	27.18%
Neutral	129	10.92%
Disagree	461	39.03%
Strongly Disagree	196	16.60%
Don't Know	13	1.10%
Total	1181	

Q171

I think that Australian people generally agree that Languages are important part of the curriculum of Australian schools

Strongly Agree	31	2.63%
Agree	257	21.82%
Neutral	218	18.51%
Disagree	499	42.36%
Strongly Disagree	139	11.80%
Don't Know	34	2.89%
Total	1178	

Q172

Schools and universities work well together on Language education issues in my State/Territory

Strongly Agree	18	1.53%
Agree	186	15.83%
Neutral	240	20.43%
Disagree	411	34.98%
Strongly Disagree	114	9.70%
Don't Know	206	17.53%
Total	1175	

Q173

Language teacher training courses are of a high quality in Australian Universities

Strongly Agree	61	5.18%
Agree	377	32.00%
Neutral	286	24.28%
Disagree	188	15.96%
Strongly Disagree	64	5.43%
Don't Know	202	17.15%
Total	1178	

Q174

Student progress in Language classes is reported on as thoroughly as it is in other core subjects at my school

Strongly Agree	449	38.12%
Agree	455	38.62%
Neutral	89	7.56%
Disagree	126	10.70%
Strongly Disagree	45	3.82%
Don't Know	14	1.19%
Total	1178	

Q175

Language classes, more than other classes, are interrupted or cancelled due to other school activities

Strongly Agree	109	9.25%
Agree	236	20.02%
Neutral	192	16.28%
Disagree	459	38.93%
Strongly Disagree	160	13.57%
Don't Know	23	1.95%
Total	1179	

Q176

Students would make better progress in learning a Language if it was offered for a full year rather than over a semester

Strongly Agree	728	61.90%
Agree	327	27.81%
Neutral	73	6.21%
Disagree	24	2.04%
Strongly Disagree	2	0.17%
Don't Know	22	1.87%
Total	1176	

Q177

Special needs students should be withdrawn or exempted from Language classes

Strongly Agree	66	5.62%
Agree	170	14.47%
Neutral	279	23.74%
Disagree	424	36.09%
Strongly Disagree	209	17.79%
Don't Know	27	2.30%
Total	1175	

Q178

As a Language teacher I would rank my overall level of satisfaction with my job as follows:

Very Satisfied	440	37.16%
Somewhat Satisfied	545	46.03%
Neutral	45	3.80%
Somewhat Dissatisfied	104	8.78%
Very Dissatisfied	50	4.22%
Total	1184	

Appendix 1E PRINCIPAL DATA

Q180

I am Principal of a:

Government primary school	121	45.15%
Government secondary school	44	16.42%
Government combined primary/secondary school	16	5.97%
Catholic primary school	33	12.31%
Catholic secondary school	11	4.10%
Catholic combined primary/secondary school	2	0.75%
Independent primary school	17	6.34%
Independent secondary school	1	0.37%
Independent combined primary/secondary school	23	8.58%

Total **268**

Q181

My personal ability to speak a language other than English is best described as:

Good	45	16.79%
Fair	31	11.57%
Limited	101	37.69%
Not at all	91	33.96%

Total **268**

Q182

Choose as many of the following statements which are true for the Language teaching program in your school:

My school operates a language immersion program	43	12.32%
Language and culture is taught as a stand-alone subject	211	60.46%
Special events such as Language Days, excursions and overseas trips are offered as part of the Languages course	95	27.22%

Total **349**

Q183

Learning a Language helps students understand the world around them

Strongly Agree	147	55.06%
Agree	91	34.08%
Neutral	15	5.62%
Disagree	7	2.62%
Strongly Disagree	5	1.87%
Don't Know	2	0.75%

Total **267**

Q184

Studying Languages is less useful these days, because English is now spoken so widely around the world

Strongly Agree	6	2.25%
Agree	26	9.74%

Neutral	19	7.12%
Disagree	98	36.70%
Strongly Disagree	117	43.82%
Don't Know	1	0.37%
Total	267	

Q185

Learning a Language helps with learning English

Strongly Agree	94	35.07%
Agree	106	39.55%
Neutral	39	14.55%
Disagree	15	5.60%
Strongly Disagree	6	2.24%
Don't Know	8	2.99%
Total	268	

Q186

Students who struggle with English should not have to learn another Language

Strongly Agree	15	5.64%
Agree	47	17.67%
Neutral	42	15.79%
Disagree	105	39.47%
Strongly Disagree	52	19.55%
Don't Know	5	1.88%
Total	266	

Q187

All students are capable of learning a Language

Strongly Agree	54	20.15%
Agree	141	52.61%
Neutral	27	10.07%
Disagree	36	13.43%
Strongly Disagree	6	2.24%
Don't Know	4	1.49%
Total	268	

Q188

The best way to learn about another culture is through learning a Language

Strongly Agree	36	13.48%
Agree	121	45.32%
Neutral	54	20.22%
Disagree	41	15.36%
Strongly Disagree	12	4.49%
Don't Know	3	1.12%
Total	267	

Q189

I believe that Languages are well taught in Australian schools

Strongly Agree	10	3.75%
Agree	56	20.97%
Neutral	61	22.85%
Disagree	87	32.58%
Strongly Disagree	38	14.23%
Don't Know	15	5.62%
Total	267	

Q190

Language teachers are well respected by students in my school

Strongly Agree	62	23.48%
Agree	106	40.15%
Neutral	45	17.05%
Disagree	27	10.23%
Strongly Disagree	15	5.68%
Don't Know	9	3.41%
Total	264	

Q191

Discipline in Language classes is not as good as in other classes

Strongly Agree	21	7.89%
Agree	59	22.18%
Neutral	32	12.03%
Disagree	95	35.71%
Strongly Disagree	53	19.92%
Don't Know	6	2.26%
Total	266	

Q192

Language teachers at my school are well qualified

Strongly Agree	99	37.36%
Agree	97	36.60%
Neutral	30	11.32%
Disagree	23	8.68%
Strongly Disagree	8	3.02%
Don't Know	8	3.02%
Total	265	

Q193

I would be happy for my own children to learn a Language at my school

Strongly Agree	136	51.13%
Agree	87	32.71%
Neutral	19	7.14%
Disagree	11	4.14%
Strongly Disagree	7	2.63%
Don't Know	6	2.26%
Total	266	

Q194

Learning a Language should be compulsory for all primary school students		
Strongly Agree	75	28.20%
Agree	84	31.58%
Neutral	32	12.03%
Disagree	48	18.05%
Strongly Disagree	24	9.02%
Don't Know	3	1.13%
Total	266	

Q195

Languages should be compulsory for all high school students in the junior years		
Strongly Agree	65	24.44%
Agree	109	40.98%
Neutral	34	12.78%
Disagree	39	14.66%
Strongly Disagree	17	6.39%
Don't Know	2	0.75%
Total	266	

Q196

Language learning is often interrupted because of a shortage of qualified teachers		
Strongly Agree	106	39.85%
Agree	109	40.98%
Neutral	16	6.02%
Disagree	20	7.52%
Strongly Disagree	3	1.13%
Don't Know	12	4.51%
Total	266	

Q197

Languages are well coordinated between primary and high schools in my area		
Strongly Agree	12	4.48%
Agree	50	18.66%
Neutral	25	9.33%
Disagree	94	35.07%
Strongly Disagree	75	27.99%
Don't Know	12	4.48%
Total	268	

Q198

Language teaching is well resourced in my school		
Strongly Agree	51	19.25%
Agree	115	43.40%
Neutral	27	10.19%
Disagree	48	18.11%
Strongly Disagree	20	7.55%
Don't Know	4	1.51%
Total	265	

Q199

Many Australian students see little importance in learning a Language

Strongly Agree	44	16.42%
Agree	148	55.22%
Neutral	24	8.96%
Disagree	38	14.18%
Strongly Disagree	3	1.12%
Don't Know	11	4.10%

Total **268**

Q200

Languages have a high profile in my school

Strongly Agree	48	17.98%
Agree	97	36.33%
Neutral	43	16.10%
Disagree	61	22.85%
Strongly Disagree	16	5.99%
Don't Know	2	0.75%

Total **267**

Q201

Language teaching has an important position in the curriculum of my State/Territory

Strongly Agree	12	4.53%
Agree	119	44.91%
Neutral	47	17.74%
Disagree	68	25.66%
Strongly Disagree	11	4.15%
Don't Know	8	3.02%

Total **265**

Q202

Many Australian parents do not see the relevance of learning a Language

Strongly Agree	49	18.42%
Agree	150	56.39%
Neutral	20	7.52%
Disagree	37	13.91%
Strongly Disagree	3	1.13%
Don't Know	7	2.63%

Total **266**

Q203

Given Australia's geographic position, it makes more sense to learn an Asian rather than a European language

Strongly Agree	28	10.53%
Agree	76	28.57%
Neutral	62	23.31%
Disagree	82	30.83%
Strongly Disagree	16	6.02%
Don't Know	2	0.75%

Total	266
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Q204

Learning a Language can enhance a child's future employment prospects

Strongly Agree	67	25.09%
Agree	157	58.80%
Neutral	31	11.61%
Disagree	5	1.87%
Strongly Disagree	4	1.50%
Don't Know	3	1.12%

Total	267
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Q205

Learning a Language should start in the early years of Primary school

Strongly Agree	107	40.23%
Agree	104	39.10%
Neutral	17	6.39%
Disagree	27	10.15%
Strongly Disagree	5	1.88%
Don't Know	6	2.26%

Total	266
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Q206

It is not too late to start the study of a new Language in high school

Strongly Agree	66	24.81%
Agree	160	60.15%
Neutral	17	6.39%
Disagree	19	7.14%
Strongly Disagree	2	0.75%
Don't Know	2	0.75%

Total	266
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Q207

Learning character based languages such as Japanese, Chinese or Korean is too hard for most students

Strongly Agree	12	4.56%
Agree	44	16.73%
Neutral	50	19.01%
Disagree	106	40.30%
Strongly Disagree	22	8.37%
Don't Know	29	11.03%

Total	263
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Q208

My school keeps parents well informed about issues involving Language study

Strongly Agree	28	10.53%
Agree	112	42.11%
Neutral	65	24.44%

Disagree	51	19.17%
Strongly Disagree	7	2.63%
Don't Know	3	1.13%
Total	266	

Q209

My school is very accommodating of different beliefs and cultures within its community

Strongly Agree	99	37.08%
Agree	127	47.57%
Neutral	30	11.24%
Disagree	8	3.00%
Strongly Disagree	2	0.75%
Don't Know	1	0.37%
Total	267	

Q210

If there were to be a change in the Languages offered at this school, I would expect parents would be consulted

Strongly Agree	137	51.50%
Agree	96	36.09%
Neutral	17	6.39%
Disagree	10	3.76%
Strongly Disagree	4	1.50%
Don't Know	2	0.75%
Total	266	

Q211

Curriculum decisions are best left to the teaching staff of the school, as they are the experts

Strongly Agree	25	9.43%
Agree	94	35.47%
Neutral	49	18.49%
Disagree	80	30.19%
Strongly Disagree	15	5.66%
Don't Know	2	0.75%
Total	265	

Q212

Learning a Language can improve a child's self-esteem

Strongly Agree	59	22.10%
Agree	150	56.18%
Neutral	37	13.86%
Disagree	12	4.49%
Strongly Disagree	3	1.12%
Don't Know	6	2.25%
Total	267	

Q213

The term “intercultural language learning” is probably not well understood by parents

Strongly Agree	70	26.12%
Agree	174	64.93%
Neutral	8	2.99%
Disagree	4	1.49%
Strongly Disagree	2	0.75%
Don't Know	10	3.73%
Total	268	

Q214

I believe that studying a Language other than English will benefit children later in life

Strongly Agree	93	34.70%
Agree	135	50.37%
Neutral	22	8.21%
Disagree	9	3.36%
Strongly Disagree	4	1.49%
Don't Know	5	1.87%
Total	268	

Q215

I am confident that my school allocates sufficient time for students to properly learn a Language

Strongly Agree	31	11.70%
Agree	85	32.08%
Neutral	40	15.09%
Disagree	78	29.43%
Strongly Disagree	26	9.81%
Don't Know	5	1.89%
Total	265	

Q216

Although Languages is one of the 8 core curriculum areas in schools, it is often “eighth in name, eighth in delivery and eighth in priority”

Strongly Agree	57	21.35%
Agree	112	41.95%
Neutral	26	9.74%
Disagree	52	19.48%
Strongly Disagree	14	5.24%
Don't Know	6	2.25%
Total	267	

Q217

Australian schools should reduce the number of Languages on offer in order to improve learning continuity between schools and the supply of teachers

Strongly Agree	20	7.46%
Agree	75	27.99%
Neutral	67	25.00%
Disagree	80	29.85%

Strongly Disagree	9	3.36%
Don't Know	17	6.34%
Total	268	

Q218

I am strongly committed to supporting my school's Language program

Strongly Agree	120	44.78%
Agree	102	38.06%
Neutral	28	10.45%
Disagree	6	2.24%
Strongly Disagree	7	2.61%
Don't Know	5	1.87%
Total	268	

Q219

Australians as a people do not seem very interested in learning other Languages

Strongly Agree	26	9.70%
Agree	133	49.63%
Neutral	42	15.67%
Disagree	50	18.66%
Strongly Disagree	4	1.49%
Don't Know	13	4.85%
Total	268	

Q220

In my experience, children find the study of Languages stimulating

Strongly Agree	31	11.57%
Agree	142	52.99%
Neutral	51	19.03%
Disagree	32	11.94%
Strongly Disagree	7	2.61%
Don't Know	5	1.87%
Total	268	

Q221

The Education Department/Education Office in my state/territory provides strong leadership and commitment to Language education programs

Strongly Agree	10	3.76%
Agree	67	25.19%
Neutral	69	25.94%
Disagree	74	27.82%
Strongly Disagree	28	10.53%
Don't Know	18	6.77%
Total	266	

Q222

I am concerned that only around 10% of Australian Year 12 students study a Language other than English

Strongly Agree	43	16.29%
Agree	92	34.85%
Neutral	64	24.24%
Disagree	48	18.18%
Strongly Disagree	12	4.55%
Don't Know	5	1.89%
Total	264	

Q223

Language teachers at my school routinely use the internet and new communications technology in their classes

Strongly Agree	50	18.66%
Agree	92	34.33%
Neutral	35	13.06%
Disagree	67	25.00%
Strongly Disagree	10	3.73%
Don't Know	14	5.22%
Total	268	

Q224

I am aware of the National Statement and Plan for Languages Education in Schools 2005-2008

Strongly Agree	36	13.48%
Agree	129	48.31%
Neutral	28	10.49%
Disagree	46	17.23%
Strongly Disagree	7	2.62%
Don't Know	21	7.87%
Total	267	

Q225

I am confident that the Commonwealth and the States will provide sufficient resources to fully implement the National Plan

Strongly Agree	2	0.75%
Agree	25	9.36%
Neutral	63	23.60%
Disagree	94	35.21%
Strongly Disagree	57	21.35%
Don't Know	26	9.74%
Total	267	

Q226

My school regularly reviews its Languages programs to assess their effectiveness

Strongly Agree	25	9.36%
Agree	133	49.81%
Neutral	51	19.10%
Disagree	43	16.10%
Strongly Disagree	10	3.75%
Don't Know	5	1.87%

Total	267
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Q227

Schools in my state regularly review their Language programs to ensure their continuing effectiveness

Strongly Agree	6	2.26%
Agree	43	16.23%
Neutral	85	32.08%
Disagree	46	17.36%
Strongly Disagree	13	4.91%
Don't Know	72	27.17%
Total	265	

Q228

If my school reviewed its Languages program, we would involve parents in the process

Strongly Agree	57	21.43%
Agree	176	66.17%
Neutral	13	4.89%
Disagree	11	4.14%
Strongly Disagree	4	1.50%
Don't Know	5	1.88%
Total	266	

Q229

Schools in my state routinely involve parents in the review of their Language programs

Strongly Agree	3	1.12%
Agree	38	14.23%
Neutral	76	28.46%
Disagree	42	15.73%
Strongly Disagree	8	3.00%
Don't Know	100	37.45%
Total	267	

Q230

Studying another Language can be confusing for children, especially those who have limited English literacy skills

Strongly Agree	15	5.62%
Agree	68	25.47%
Neutral	40	14.98%
Disagree	112	41.95%
Strongly Disagree	27	10.11%
Don't Know	5	1.87%
Total	267	

Q231

I think that Australian people generally agree that Languages are an important part of the curriculum of Australian schools

Strongly Agree	6	2.26%
Agree	79	29.70%
Neutral	35	13.16%
Disagree	113	42.48%
Strongly Disagree	13	4.89%
Don't Know	20	7.52%
Total	266	

Q232

Student progress in Language classes is reported on as thoroughly as it is in other core subjects at my school

Strongly Agree	67	25.00%
Agree	107	39.93%
Neutral	20	7.46%
Disagree	52	19.40%
Strongly Disagree	15	5.60%
Don't Know	7	2.61%
Total	268	

Q233

Language classes, more than other classes, are interrupted or cancelled due to other school activities

Strongly Agree	6	2.25%
Agree	21	7.87%
Neutral	21	7.87%
Disagree	126	47.19%
Strongly Disagree	80	29.96%
Don't Know	13	4.87%
Total	267	

Q234

Students would make better progress in learning a Language if it was offered for a full year rather than over a semester

Strongly Agree	72	26.87%
Agree	131	48.88%
Neutral	30	11.19%
Disagree	7	2.61%
Strongly Disagree	3	1.12%
Don't Know	25	9.33%
Total	268	

Q235

Special needs students should be withdrawn or exempted from Language classes

Strongly Agree	14	5.26%
Agree	45	16.92%
Neutral	75	28.20%
Disagree	89	33.46%
Strongly Disagree	26	9.77%
Don't Know	17	6.39%

Total	266
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Q236	
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Schools and universities work well together on Language education issues in my State/Territory

Strongly Agree	0	0.00%
Agree	12	4.49%
Neutral	58	21.72%
Disagree	71	26.59%
Strongly Disagree	24	8.99%
Don't Know	102	38.20%
Total	267	

Q237	
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Language teacher training courses are of a high quality in Australian Universities

Strongly Agree	5	1.87%
Agree	40	14.93%
Neutral	57	21.27%
Disagree	32	11.94%
Strongly Disagree	10	3.73%
Don't Know	124	46.27%
Total	268	

Q238	
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Please rank your overall level of satisfaction with the quality of Languages as taught in your school

Very Satisfied	103	38.43%
Somewhat Satisfied	89	33.21%
Neutral	16	5.97%
Somewhat Dissatisfied	34	12.69%
Very Dissatisfied	26	9.70%
Total	268	

Appendix 1F LANGUAGE ADVISOR DATA

Q240

My personal ability to speak a Language other than English is best described as:

Good	41	42.71%
Fair	17	17.71%
Limited	16	16.67%
Not at all	22	22.92%

Total 96

Q241

Mark as many of the following that apply to your situation.

I have responsibility for Languages curriculum, teacher development and/or assessment in:

Government schools	75	59.52%
Catholic schools	24	19.05%
Independent schools	27	21.43%

Total 126

Q242

Learning a Language helps students understand the world around them

Strongly Agree	62	64.58%
Agree	27	28.13%
Neutral	4	4.17%
Disagree	1	1.04%
Strongly Disagree	2	2.08%
Don't Know	0	0.00%

Total 96

Q243

One of the challenges for Language teaching is the perception that because English is now spoken so widely

around the world, learning another Language is not important

Strongly Agree	35	36.46%
Agree	36	37.50%
Neutral	5	5.21%
Disagree	11	11.46%
Strongly Disagree	9	9.38%
Don't Know	0	0.00%

Total 96

Q244

Learning a Language helps with learning English

Strongly Agree	50	53.19%
Agree	29	30.85%
Neutral	7	7.45%
Disagree	5	5.32%
Strongly Disagree	1	1.06%
Don't Know	2	2.13%

Total 94

Q245

Students who struggle with English should not have to learn another Language

Strongly Agree	6	6.25%
Agree	12	12.50%
Neutral	7	7.29%
Disagree	40	41.67%
Strongly Disagree	31	32.29%
Don't Know	0	0.00%

Total 96**Q246**

All students are capable of learning a Language

Strongly Agree	27	28.13%
Agree	47	48.96%
Neutral	11	11.46%
Disagree	5	5.21%
Strongly Disagree	4	4.17%
Don't Know	2	2.08%

Total 96**Q247**

The best way to learn about another culture is through learning a Language

Strongly Agree	39	40.63%
Agree	32	33.33%
Neutral	13	13.54%
Disagree	10	10.42%
Strongly Disagree	2	2.08%
Don't Know	0	0.00%

Total 96**Q248**

I believe that Languages are well taught in Australian schools

Strongly Agree	2	2.08%
Agree	22	22.92%
Neutral	31	32.29%
Disagree	27	28.13%
Strongly Disagree	10	10.42%
Don't Know	4	4.17%

Total 96**Q249**

Language teachers are well respected in the schools with whom I have personal contact

Strongly Agree	6	6.32%
Agree	27	28.42%
Neutral	25	26.32%
Disagree	29	30.53%
Strongly Disagree	6	6.32%
Don't Know	2	2.11%

Total 95

Q250

Student behaviour in Languages classes is often worse than in other classes

Strongly Agree	7	7.29%
Agree	26	27.08%
Neutral	16	16.67%
Disagree	35	36.46%
Strongly Disagree	4	4.17%
Don't Know	8	8.33%

Total **96**

Q251

Some Language teachers are poorly qualified for the job that they are required to do in their schools

Strongly Agree	7	7.29%
Agree	56	58.33%
Neutral	14	14.58%
Disagree	13	13.54%
Strongly Disagree	3	3.13%
Don't Know	3	3.13%

Total **96**

Q252

Given Australia's geographic location, it makes more sense for students to learn Asian languages rather than European languages

Strongly Agree	9	9.38%
Agree	26	27.08%
Neutral	12	12.50%
Disagree	42	43.75%
Strongly Disagree	7	7.29%
Don't Know	0	0.00%

Total **96**

Q253

I am confident that my own children would receive a good Language education in every school in my State

Strongly Agree	1	1.05%
Agree	9	9.47%
Neutral	16	16.84%
Disagree	45	47.37%
Strongly Disagree	20	21.05%
Don't Know	4	4.21%

Total **95**

Q254

Language learning should be compulsory in every Australian primary school

Strongly Agree	28	30.11%
Agree	33	35.48%
Neutral	12	12.90%
Disagree	13	13.98%
Strongly Disagree	7	7.53%

Don't Know	0	0.00%
Total	93	

Q255

Languages should be compulsory for all high school students in the junior years

Strongly Agree	34	35.79%
Agree	36	37.89%
Neutral	9	9.47%
Disagree	9	9.47%
Strongly Disagree	6	6.32%
Don't Know	1	1.05%
Total	95	

Q256

Language learning is often interrupted because of a shortage of qualified teachers

Strongly Agree	31	32.63%
Agree	46	48.42%
Neutral	8	8.42%
Disagree	4	4.21%
Strongly Disagree	1	1.05%
Don't Know	5	5.26%
Total	95	

Q257

Languages are well coordinated between primary and high schools in my State

Strongly Agree	2	2.08%
Agree	6	6.25%
Neutral	16	16.67%
Disagree	47	48.96%
Strongly Disagree	21	21.88%
Don't Know	4	4.17%
Total	96	

Q258

Language teaching is well resourced in this State

Strongly Agree	3	3.13%
Agree	10	10.42%
Neutral	15	15.63%
Disagree	41	42.71%
Strongly Disagree	21	21.88%
Don't Know	6	6.25%
Total	96	

Q259

Many Australian students see little relevance in learning a Language

Strongly Agree	22	22.92%
Agree	54	56.25%
Neutral	10	10.42%
Disagree	10	10.42%

Strongly Disagree	0	0.00%
Don't Know	0	0.00%
Total	96	

Q260

Languages have a high profile in this State

Strongly Agree	1	1.04%
Agree	10	10.42%
Neutral	19	19.79%
Disagree	52	54.17%
Strongly Disagree	13	13.54%
Don't Know	1	1.04%
Total	96	

Q261

Languages hold a strong position in my State/Territory curriculum

Strongly Agree	1	1.05%
Agree	14	14.74%
Neutral	23	24.21%
Disagree	48	50.53%
Strongly Disagree	6	6.32%
Don't Know	3	3.16%
Total	95	

Q262

Many Australian parents do not see the relevance of learning a Language

Strongly Agree	27	28.42%
Agree	53	55.79%
Neutral	5	5.26%
Disagree	4	4.21%
Strongly Disagree	1	1.05%
Don't Know	5	5.26%
Total	95	

Q263

Universities in my State/Territory regularly review their Language programs to assess their effectiveness

Strongly Agree	2	2.08%
Agree	9	9.38%
Neutral	23	23.96%
Disagree	13	13.54%
Strongly Disagree	6	6.25%
Don't Know	43	44.79%
Total	96	

Q264

Learning a Language can enhance a child's future employment prospects

Strongly Agree	30	31.25%
Agree	52	54.17%
Neutral	10	10.42%

Disagree	3	3.13%
Strongly Disagree	1	1.04%
Don't Know	0	0.00%
Total	96	

Q265

Learning a Language should start in the early years of Primary school

Strongly Agree	48	50.00%
Agree	33	34.38%
Neutral	7	7.29%
Disagree	6	6.25%
Strongly Disagree	2	2.08%
Don't Know	0	0.00%
Total	96	

Q266

It is not too late to start the study of a new Language in high school

Strongly Agree	34	35.42%
Agree	46	47.92%
Neutral	7	7.29%
Disagree	5	5.21%
Strongly Disagree	4	4.17%
Don't Know	0	0.00%
Total	96	

Q267

Learning character based Languages such as Japanese, Chinese or Korean is too hard for most students

Strongly Agree	4	4.17%
Agree	18	18.75%
Neutral	19	19.79%
Disagree	37	38.54%
Strongly Disagree	14	14.58%
Don't Know	4	4.17%
Total	96	

Q268

Schools in my State keep parents well informed about issues involving Language study

Strongly Agree	0	0.00%
Agree	11	11.46%
Neutral	18	18.75%
Disagree	41	42.71%
Strongly Disagree	14	14.58%
Don't Know	12	12.50%
Total	96	

Q269

Schools in this State are very accommodating of different beliefs and cultures within their communities

Strongly Agree	11	11.70%
Agree	39	41.49%

Neutral	23	24.47%
Disagree	15	15.96%
Strongly Disagree	3	3.19%
Don't Know	3	3.19%
Total	94	

Q270

If there were to be a change in the Languages offered at a particular school, I would anticipate that parents would be consulted

Strongly Agree	20	21.05%
Agree	46	48.42%
Neutral	9	9.47%
Disagree	15	15.79%
Strongly Disagree	3	3.16%
Don't Know	2	2.11%
Total	95	

Q271

Curriculum decisions are best left to the teaching staff of schools, as they are the experts

Strongly Agree	7	7.37%
Agree	26	27.37%
Neutral	20	21.05%
Disagree	37	38.95%
Strongly Disagree	4	4.21%
Don't Know	1	1.05%
Total	95	

Q272

Learning a Language can improve a child's self-esteem

Strongly Agree	31	32.29%
Agree	52	54.17%
Neutral	8	8.33%
Disagree	2	2.08%
Strongly Disagree	3	3.13%
Don't Know	0	0.00%
Total	96	

Q273

The term "intercultural language learning" is probably not well understood by parents

Strongly Agree	27	28.13%
Agree	59	61.46%
Neutral	4	4.17%
Disagree	1	1.04%
Strongly Disagree	0	0.00%
Don't Know	5	5.21%
Total	96	

Q274

I find that girls are more proficient at learning Languages than boys

Strongly Agree	8	8.33%
Agree	30	31.25%
Neutral	24	25.00%
Disagree	26	27.08%
Strongly Disagree	0	0.00%
Don't Know	8	8.33%
Total	96	

Q275

Morale is high amongst Language teachers regarding the future of Language learning

Strongly Agree	0	0.00%
Agree	5	5.21%
Neutral	13	13.54%
Disagree	39	40.63%
Strongly Disagree	29	30.21%
Don't Know	10	10.42%
Total	96	

Q276

Access to good quality ICT is a problem for Language teaching

Strongly Agree	11	11.46%
Agree	48	50.00%
Neutral	12	12.50%
Disagree	14	14.58%
Strongly Disagree	0	0.00%
Don't Know	11	11.46%
Total	96	

Q277

The internet lacks relevant content for use during lessons in Language classes

Strongly Agree	5	5.21%
Agree	12	12.50%
Neutral	18	18.75%
Disagree	28	29.17%
Strongly Disagree	12	12.50%
Don't Know	21	21.88%
Total	96	

Q278

I am convinced of the value of ICT as an appropriate tool for learning Languages

Strongly Agree	32	33.33%
Agree	48	50.00%
Neutral	10	10.42%
Disagree	1	1.04%
Strongly Disagree	2	2.08%
Don't Know	3	3.13%
Total	96	

Q279

Many Language teachers are overwhelmed with work		
Strongly Agree	23	24.21%
Agree	32	33.68%
Neutral	20	21.05%
Disagree	10	10.53%
Strongly Disagree	0	0.00%
Don't Know	10	10.53%
Total	95	

Q280

Language teachers often struggle to effectively educate students about intercultural knowledge		
Strongly Agree	9	9.47%
Agree	41	43.16%
Neutral	16	16.84%
Disagree	23	24.21%
Strongly Disagree	1	1.05%
Don't Know	5	5.26%
Total	95	

Q281

I believe that studying a Language other than English will benefit children later in life		
Strongly Agree	54	57.45%
Agree	29	30.85%
Neutral	6	6.38%
Disagree	4	4.26%
Strongly Disagree	1	1.06%
Don't Know	0	0.00%
Total	94	

Q282

Schools do not generally allocate sufficient time to properly learn a Language		
Strongly Agree	46	47.92%
Agree	31	32.29%
Neutral	7	7.29%
Disagree	8	8.33%
Strongly Disagree	1	1.04%
Don't Know	3	3.13%
Total	96	

Q283

Although Language study is one of the 8 core curriculum areas in schools, it is often "eighth in name, eighth in delivery and eighth in priority"		
Strongly Agree	52	54.17%
Agree	31	32.29%
Neutral	8	8.33%
Disagree	1	1.04%
Strongly Disagree	2	2.08%
Don't Know	2	2.08%
Total	96	

Q284

Australian schools should reduce the number of Languages on offer in order to improve learning continuity between schools and the supply of teachers

Strongly Agree	10	10.53%
Agree	28	29.47%
Neutral	20	21.05%
Disagree	32	33.68%
Strongly Disagree	3	3.16%
Don't Know	2	2.11%

Total 95

Q285

In my experience, school principals are highly committed to the implementation of Language programs

Strongly Agree	3	3.16%
Agree	15	15.79%
Neutral	18	18.95%
Disagree	44	46.32%
Strongly Disagree	14	14.74%
Don't Know	1	1.05%

Total 95

Q286

Australians as a people do not seem very interested in learning other Languages

Strongly Agree	25	26.32%
Agree	44	46.32%
Neutral	11	11.58%
Disagree	11	11.58%
Strongly Disagree	2	2.11%
Don't Know	2	2.11%

Total 95

Q287

In my experience, children find the study of Languages stimulating

Strongly Agree	10	10.53%
Agree	56	58.95%
Neutral	10	10.53%
Disagree	16	16.84%
Strongly Disagree	3	3.16%
Don't Know	0	0.00%

Total 95

Q288

The Education Department/Office in my state/territory provides strong leadership and commitment to Language education programs

Strongly Agree	5	5.26%
Agree	28	29.47%
Neutral	28	29.47%
Disagree	25	26.32%
Strongly Disagree	6	6.32%

Don't Know	3	3.16%
Total	95	

Q289

I am concerned that only around 10% of Australian Year 12 students study a Language other than English

Strongly Agree	43	44.79%
Agree	33	34.38%
Neutral	10	10.42%
Disagree	7	7.29%
Strongly Disagree	3	3.13%
Don't Know	0	0.00%
Total	96	

Q290

I support the National Statement and Plan for Languages Education in Schools 2005-2008

Strongly Agree	33	34.38%
Agree	34	35.42%
Neutral	15	15.63%
Disagree	1	1.04%
Strongly Disagree	3	3.13%
Don't Know	10	10.42%
Total	96	

Q291

I am confident that the Commonwealth and the States will provide sufficient resources to fully implement the National Plan

Strongly Agree	5	5.32%
Agree	7	7.45%
Neutral	24	25.53%
Disagree	37	39.36%
Strongly Disagree	13	13.83%
Don't Know	8	8.51%
Total	94	

Q292

Schools in my State regularly review their Language programs to assess their effectiveness

Strongly Agree	1	1.05%
Agree	19	20.00%
Neutral	26	27.37%
Disagree	32	33.68%
Strongly Disagree	4	4.21%
Don't Know	13	13.68%
Total	95	

Q293

Schools in my State routinely involve parents in reviewing their Language programs

Strongly Agree	0	0.00%
Agree	8	8.42%
Neutral	19	20.00%

Disagree	38	40.00%
Strongly Disagree	10	10.53%
Don't Know	20	21.05%
Total	95	

Q294

Studying another Language can be confusing for children, especially those who have limited English literacy skills

Strongly Agree	8	8.42%
Agree	12	12.63%
Neutral	12	12.63%
Disagree	43	45.26%
Strongly Disagree	18	18.95%
Don't Know	2	2.11%
Total	95	

Q295

I think that Australian people generally agree that Languages are important part of the curriculum of Australian schools

Strongly Agree	2	2.08%
Agree	19	19.79%
Neutral	13	13.54%
Disagree	51	53.13%
Strongly Disagree	10	10.42%
Don't Know	1	1.04%
Total	96	

Q296

Student progress in Language classes is reported on as thoroughly as it is in other core subjects at schools in my State/area

Strongly Agree	7	7.29%
Agree	31	32.29%
Neutral	16	16.67%
Disagree	28	29.17%
Strongly Disagree	8	8.33%
Don't Know	6	6.25%
Total	96	

Q297

Language classes, more than other classes, are interrupted or cancelled due to other school activities

Strongly Agree	11	11.46%
Agree	22	22.92%
Neutral	21	21.88%
Disagree	22	22.92%
Strongly Disagree	4	4.17%
Don't Know	16	16.67%
Total	96	

Q298

Students would make better progress in learning a Language if it was offered for a full year rather than over a semester

Strongly Agree	39	40.63%
Agree	39	40.63%
Neutral	12	12.50%
Disagree	2	2.08%
Strongly Disagree	1	1.04%
Don't Know	3	3.13%
Total	96	

Q299

Special needs students should be withdrawn or exempted from Language classes

Strongly Agree	4	4.17%
Agree	11	11.46%
Neutral	23	23.96%
Disagree	43	44.79%
Strongly Disagree	14	14.58%
Don't Know	1	1.04%
Total	96	

Q300

Schools and universities work well together on Language education issues in my State/Territory

Strongly Agree	3	3.13%
Agree	11	11.46%
Neutral	19	19.79%
Disagree	33	34.38%
Strongly Disagree	11	11.46%
Don't Know	19	19.79%
Total	96	

Q301

Language teacher training courses are of a high quality in Australian Universities

Strongly Agree	3	3.13%
Agree	11	11.46%
Neutral	21	21.88%
Disagree	28	29.17%
Strongly Disagree	4	4.17%
Don't Know	29	30.21%
Total	96	

Q302

Please rate your level of satisfaction with the quality of Languages teaching and learning in the schools in your area of responsibility in your state or area

Very Satisfied	6	6.25%
Somewhat Satisfied	47	48.96%
Neutral	13	13.54%
Somewhat Dissatisfied	21	21.88%
Very Dissatisfied	9	9.38%
Total	96	

Appendix 1G TERTIARY LANGUAGE TEACHERS DATA

Q304		
My teaching, supervision and/or research interest is in the area of:		
Asian languages	40	33.06%
European languages	52	42.98%
Both Asian and European languages	29	23.97%
Total	121	

Q305		
Learning a Language helps students understand the world around them		
Strongly Agree	106	88.33%
Agree	11	9.17%
Neutral	0	0.00%
Disagree	2	1.67%
Strongly Disagree	1	0.83%
Don't Know	0	0.00%
Total	120	

Q306		
One of the challenges for Language teaching is the perception that because English is now spoken so widely around the world, learning another Language is not important		
Strongly Agree	66	55.00%
Agree	34	28.33%
Neutral	8	6.67%
Disagree	6	5.00%
Strongly Disagree	6	5.00%
Don't Know	0	0.00%
Total	120	

Q307		
Learning a Language helps with learning English		
Strongly Agree	88	73.95%
Agree	21	17.65%
Neutral	6	5.04%
Disagree	1	0.84%
Strongly Disagree	3	2.52%
Don't Know	0	0.00%
Total	119	

Q308		
Students who struggle with English should not have to learn another Language		
Strongly Agree	0	0.00%
Agree	2	1.65%
Neutral	20	16.53%
Disagree	49	40.50%
Strongly Disagree	48	39.67%
Don't Know	2	1.65%

Total	121
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Q309

All school students are capable of learning a Language		
Strongly Agree	60	50.00%
Agree	43	35.83%
Neutral	7	5.83%
Disagree	7	5.83%
Strongly Disagree	1	0.83%
Don't Know	2	1.67%

Total	120
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Q310

The best way to learn about another culture is through learning a Language		
Strongly Agree	65	54.17%
Agree	45	37.50%
Neutral	5	4.17%
Disagree	3	2.50%
Strongly Disagree	1	0.83%
Don't Know	1	0.83%

Total	120
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Q311

I believe that Languages are well taught in Australian schools		
Strongly Agree	1	0.83%
Agree	23	19.17%
Neutral	35	29.17%
Disagree	39	32.50%
Strongly Disagree	14	11.67%
Don't Know	8	6.67%

Total	120
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Q312

Language teachers are well respected in the schools with which I have personal contact		
Strongly Agree	3	2.50%
Agree	31	25.83%
Neutral	20	16.67%
Disagree	30	25.00%
Strongly Disagree	17	14.17%
Don't Know	19	15.83%

Total	120
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Q313

Discipline in school Language classes is not as good as in other classes		
Strongly Agree	5	4.17%
Agree	10	8.33%
Neutral	28	23.33%
Disagree	23	19.17%
Strongly Disagree	12	10.00%

Don't Know	42	35.00%
Total	120	

Q314

Some Language teachers are poorly qualified

Strongly Agree	20	16.67%
Agree	59	49.17%
Neutral	17	14.17%
Disagree	8	6.67%
Strongly Disagree	3	2.50%
Don't Know	13	10.83%
Total	120	

Q315

Given Australia's geographic location it makes more sense for students to learn an Asian rather than a European language

Strongly Agree	16	13.33%
Agree	18	15.00%
Neutral	20	16.67%
Disagree	36	30.00%
Strongly Disagree	29	24.17%
Don't Know	1	0.83%
Total	120	

Q316

I would be happy for my own children to learn a Language in any school in my State/Territory

Strongly Agree	65	55.56%
Agree	24	20.51%
Neutral	11	9.40%
Disagree	8	6.84%
Strongly Disagree	4	3.42%
Don't Know	5	4.27%
Total	117	

Q317

Language learning should be compulsory in every primary school

Strongly Agree	62	51.67%
Agree	36	30.00%
Neutral	10	8.33%
Disagree	6	5.00%
Strongly Disagree	4	3.33%
Don't Know	2	1.67%
Total	120	

Q318

Languages should be compulsory for all high school students in the junior years

Strongly Agree	80	66.12%
Agree	30	24.79%

Neutral	7	5.79%
Disagree	1	0.83%
Strongly Disagree	3	2.48%
Don't Know	0	0.00%
Total	121	

Q319

Language learning is often interrupted because of a shortage of qualified teachers

Strongly Agree	27	22.31%
Agree	49	40.50%
Neutral	15	12.40%
Disagree	5	4.13%
Strongly Disagree	2	1.65%
Don't Know	23	19.01%
Total	121	

Q320

Languages are well coordinated between primary and high schools in my State

Strongly Agree	1	0.83%
Agree	4	3.33%
Neutral	16	13.33%
Disagree	38	31.67%
Strongly Disagree	37	30.83%
Don't Know	24	20.00%
Total	120	

Q321

Language teaching is well resourced in this State

Strongly Agree	1	0.84%
Agree	10	8.40%
Neutral	11	9.24%
Disagree	42	35.29%
Strongly Disagree	42	35.29%
Don't Know	13	10.92%
Total	119	

Q322

Many Australian students see little relevance in learning a Language

Strongly Agree	27	22.31%
Agree	63	52.07%
Neutral	13	10.74%
Disagree	11	9.09%
Strongly Disagree	2	1.65%
Don't Know	5	4.13%
Total	121	

Q323

Languages have a high profile in school in this State/Territory

Strongly Agree	0	0.00%
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Agree	9	7.44%
Neutral	17	14.05%
Disagree	54	44.63%
Strongly Disagree	29	23.97%
Don't Know	12	9.92%
Total	121	

Q324

Languages hold a strong position in my State/Territory curriculum

Strongly Agree	1	0.84%
Agree	13	10.92%
Neutral	17	14.29%
Disagree	48	40.34%
Strongly Disagree	29	24.37%
Don't Know	11	9.24%
Total	119	

Q325

Many Australian parents do not see the relevance of learning a Language

Strongly Agree	33	27.50%
Agree	59	49.17%
Neutral	10	8.33%
Disagree	9	7.50%
Strongly Disagree	2	1.67%
Don't Know	7	5.83%
Total	120	

Q326

My university regularly reviews its Language programs to assess their effectiveness

Strongly Agree	31	25.62%
Agree	54	44.63%
Neutral	10	8.26%
Disagree	17	14.05%
Strongly Disagree	6	4.96%
Don't Know	3	2.48%
Total	121	

Q327

Learning a Language can enhance a child's future employment prospects

Strongly Agree	66	55.93%
Agree	46	38.98%
Neutral	2	1.69%
Disagree	2	1.69%
Strongly Disagree	2	1.69%
Don't Know	0	0.00%
Total	118	

Q328

Learning a Language should start in the early years of Primary school

Strongly Agree	59	49.17%
Agree	35	29.17%
Neutral	17	14.17%
Disagree	5	4.17%
Strongly Disagree	4	3.33%
Don't Know	0	0.00%
Total	120	

Q329

It is not too late to start the study of a new Language in high school

Strongly Agree	69	57.02%
Agree	46	38.02%
Neutral	2	1.65%
Disagree	2	1.65%
Strongly Disagree	2	1.65%
Don't Know	0	0.00%
Total	121	

Q330

Learning character based Languages such as Japanese, Chinese or Korean is too hard for most students

Strongly Agree	0	0.00%
Agree	8	6.61%
Neutral	13	10.74%
Disagree	54	44.63%
Strongly Disagree	43	35.54%
Don't Know	3	2.48%
Total	121	

Q331

Schools in my State/Territory keep parents well informed about issues involving Language study

Strongly Agree	1	0.83%
Agree	6	4.96%
Neutral	14	11.57%
Disagree	24	19.83%
Strongly Disagree	19	15.70%
Don't Know	57	47.11%
Total	121	

Q332

Schools in this State/Territory are very accommodating of different beliefs and cultures within their communities

Strongly Agree	3	2.50%
Agree	44	36.67%
Neutral	22	18.33%
Disagree	15	12.50%
Strongly Disagree	4	3.33%
Don't Know	32	26.67%
Total	120	

Q333

In this State, from my understanding, if there were to be a change in the Languages offered at a particular school, parents would be consulted

Strongly Agree	1	0.83%
Agree	29	24.17%
Neutral	13	10.83%
Disagree	17	14.17%
Strongly Disagree	9	7.50%
Don't Know	51	42.50%

Total 120

Q334

Curriculum decisions are best left to the teaching staff of schools, as they are the experts

Strongly Agree	4	3.36%
Agree	35	29.41%
Neutral	26	21.85%
Disagree	40	33.61%
Strongly Disagree	11	9.24%
Don't Know	3	2.52%

Total 119

Q335

Learning a Language can improve a child's self-esteem

Strongly Agree	62	51.67%
Agree	43	35.83%
Neutral	11	9.17%
Disagree	1	0.83%
Strongly Disagree	3	2.50%
Don't Know	0	0.00%

Total 120

Q336

The term "intercultural language learning" is probably not well understood by parents

Strongly Agree	34	28.33%
Agree	71	59.17%
Neutral	3	2.50%
Disagree	0	0.00%
Strongly Disagree	2	1.67%
Don't Know	10	8.33%

Total 120

Q337

I find that girls are more proficient at learning Languages than boys

Strongly Agree	5	4.17%
Agree	24	20.00%
Neutral	26	21.67%
Disagree	42	35.00%
Strongly Disagree	19	15.83%
Don't Know	4	3.33%

Total	120
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Q338

Morale is high amongst my Language teaching colleagues, in both schools and Universities, regarding the future of Languages

Strongly Agree	5	4.17%
Agree	11	9.17%
Neutral	9	7.50%
Disagree	54	45.00%
Strongly Disagree	40	33.33%
Don't Know	1	0.83%
Total	120	

Q339

Access to good quality ICT is a problem for Language teaching

Strongly Agree	11	9.24%
Agree	55	46.22%
Neutral	22	18.49%
Disagree	13	10.92%
Strongly Disagree	2	1.68%
Don't Know	16	13.45%
Total	119	

Q340

The internet lacks relevant content for use during lessons in school Language classes

Strongly Agree	3	2.52%
Agree	12	10.08%
Neutral	18	15.13%
Disagree	45	37.82%
Strongly Disagree	34	28.57%
Don't Know	7	5.88%
Total	119	

Q341

I am convinced of the value of ICT as an appropriate tool for learning Languages

Strongly Agree	38	31.40%
Agree	38	31.40%
Neutral	25	20.66%
Disagree	7	5.79%
Strongly Disagree	4	3.31%
Don't Know	9	7.44%
Total	121	

Q342

From my personal observation, school Languages teachers are overwhelmed with work

Strongly Agree	33	27.97%
Agree	45	38.14%
Neutral	11	9.32%
Disagree	3	2.54%

Strongly Disagree	4	3.39%
Don't Know	22	18.64%
Total	118	

Q343

Language teachers in schools are struggling to effectively educate students about intercultural knowledge

Strongly Agree	18	14.88%
Agree	50	41.32%
Neutral	16	13.22%
Disagree	8	6.61%
Strongly Disagree	2	1.65%
Don't Know	27	22.31%
Total	121	

Q344

I believe that studying a Language other than English will benefit children later in life

Strongly Agree	104	85.95%
Agree	14	11.57%
Neutral	1	0.83%
Disagree	0	0.00%
Strongly Disagree	2	1.65%
Don't Know	0	0.00%
Total	121	

Q345

Schools do not generally allocate sufficient time to properly learn a Language

Strongly Agree	80	66.12%
Agree	30	24.79%
Neutral	2	1.65%
Disagree	2	1.65%
Strongly Disagree	1	0.83%
Don't Know	6	4.96%
Total	121	

Q346

Although Language is one of the 8 core curriculum areas in schools, it is often "eighth in name, eighth in delivery and eighth in priority"

Strongly Agree	70	57.85%
Agree	29	23.97%
Neutral	6	4.96%
Disagree	0	0.00%
Strongly Disagree	1	0.83%
Don't Know	15	12.40%
Total	121	

Q347

Australian schools should reduce the number of Languages on offer in order to improve learning continuity between schools and the supply of teachers

Strongly Agree	7	5.83%
Agree	14	11.67%
Neutral	21	17.50%
Disagree	32	26.67%
Strongly Disagree	37	30.83%
Don't Know	9	7.50%
Total	120	

Q348

In my experience, school principals are highly committed to the implementation of Language programs

Strongly Agree	1	0.83%
Agree	2	1.65%
Neutral	23	19.01%
Disagree	36	29.75%
Strongly Disagree	26	21.49%
Don't Know	33	27.27%
Total	121	

Q349

Australians as a people do not seem very interested in learning other Languages

Strongly Agree	28	23.14%
Agree	61	50.41%
Neutral	15	12.40%
Disagree	13	10.74%
Strongly Disagree	1	0.83%
Don't Know	3	2.48%
Total	121	

Q350

In my experience, children find the study of Languages stimulating

Strongly Agree	31	25.62%
Agree	59	48.76%
Neutral	12	9.92%
Disagree	8	6.61%
Strongly Disagree	4	3.31%
Don't Know	7	5.79%
Total	121	

Q351

The Education Department/Office in my State/Territory provides strong leadership and commitment to Language education programs

Strongly Agree	2	1.67%
Agree	16	13.33%
Neutral	24	20.00%
Disagree	34	28.33%
Strongly Disagree	24	20.00%
Don't Know	20	16.67%
Total	120	

Q352

I am concerned that only around 10% of Australian Year 12 students study a Language other than English

Strongly Agree	96	80.00%
Agree	17	14.17%
Neutral	3	2.50%
Disagree	1	0.83%
Strongly Disagree	1	0.83%
Don't Know	2	1.67%
Total	120	

Q353

I support the National Statement and Plan for Languages Education in Schools 2005-2008

Strongly Agree	27	22.50%
Agree	28	23.33%
Neutral	14	11.67%
Disagree	4	3.33%
Strongly Disagree	4	3.33%
Don't Know	43	35.83%
Total	120	

Q354

I am confident that the Commonwealth and the States will provide sufficient resources to fully implement the National Plan

Strongly Agree	3	2.54%
Agree	2	1.69%
Neutral	18	15.25%
Disagree	36	30.51%
Strongly Disagree	30	25.42%
Don't Know	29	24.58%
Total	118	

Q355

Schools in my State regularly review their Language programs to assess their effectiveness

Strongly Agree	3	2.52%
Agree	16	13.45%
Neutral	12	10.08%
Disagree	17	14.29%
Strongly Disagree	8	6.72%
Don't Know	63	52.94%
Total	119	

Q356

Schools in my State routinely involve parents in reviewing their Language programs

Strongly Agree	0	0.00%
Agree	2	1.69%
Neutral	14	11.86%
Disagree	20	16.95%
Strongly Disagree	11	9.32%
Don't Know	71	60.17%

Total		118
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Q357

The Languages Department is strongly supported by the administration of this University

Strongly Agree	2	1.68%
Agree	27	22.69%
Neutral	26	21.85%
Disagree	32	26.89%
Strongly Disagree	27	22.69%
Don't Know	5	4.20%

Total		119
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Q358

I think that Australian people generally agree that Languages are an important part of the curriculum in Australian schools

Strongly Agree	0	0.00%
Agree	22	18.64%
Neutral	20	16.95%
Disagree	58	49.15%
Strongly Disagree	13	11.02%
Don't Know	5	4.24%

Total		118
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Q359

Studying another Language can be confusing for children, especially those who have limited English literacy skills

Strongly Agree	2	1.67%
Agree	10	8.33%
Neutral	12	10.00%
Disagree	52	43.33%
Strongly Disagree	42	35.00%
Don't Know	2	1.67%

Total		120
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Q360

Special needs students should be withdrawn or exempted from school Language classes

Strongly Agree	0	0.00%
Agree	5	4.24%
Neutral	17	14.41%
Disagree	57	48.31%
Strongly Disagree	30	25.42%
Don't Know	9	7.63%

Total		118
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Q361

Schools and universities work well together on Language education issues in my State/Territory

Strongly Agree	3	2.48%
Agree	27	22.31%
Neutral	21	17.36%

Disagree	37	30.58%
Strongly Disagree	19	15.70%
Don't Know	14	11.57%
Total	121	

Q362

At my Institution, there are links between the Languages programs and the teacher education programs

Strongly Agree	7	5.83%
Agree	40	33.33%
Neutral	20	16.67%
Disagree	28	23.33%
Strongly Disagree	16	13.33%
Don't Know	9	7.50%
Total	120	

Q363

Language teacher training courses are of a high quality in Australian Universities

Strongly Agree	4	3.31%
Agree	36	29.75%
Neutral	30	24.79%
Disagree	20	16.53%
Strongly Disagree	17	14.05%
Don't Know	14	11.57%
Total	121	

Q364

Please rate your overall satisfaction level with the quality of Languages teaching and learning in schools in your State/Territory

Very Satisfied	1	0.82%
Somewhat Satisfied	37	30.33%
Neutral	13	10.66%
Somewhat Dissatisfied	46	37.70%
Very Dissatisfied	25	20.49%
Total	122	

Appendix 2

Quantitative data - Written Responses

In addition to the 50 – 60 short answer questions, the study also included one optional free response question. The survey was administered to six different stakeholder groups in both government and non-government schooling systems, namely:

Parents
Students
Language Teachers
Principals
Language Advisors
Tertiary Language Teachers

At the conclusion of each of the respective six sections, the following invitation was extended – the student version was slightly modified.

A FINAL CHANCE TO HAVE YOUR SAY

This survey has explored a number of issues in relation to Languages teaching and learning in Australian schools. If you would like to explain in greater detail how you feel about any of the issues raised, please do so in this section.

In particular, if you believe that Languages in schools can be **STRENGTHENED**, the parent organisations sponsoring this study would be very interested in your views about **HOW** this might be accomplished.


If you are prepared to be contacted to follow up on any issues raised in the survey, you have an option of providing your contact details in the box below. Note that these details will be kept in strictest confidence and not released to any third party.

Responses

The responses have been sorted by State and by stakeholder group. Contact details have been edited out for privacy reasons, as have the identity of schools where strong negative comments were made. Where teachers were named by students, these references have been removed. Several comments contained expletives, and these have been omitted. Typographical errors have been largely corrected in the published version.


Appendix 2A - AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY


ACT Parents said.....

 **1** I have answered these questions as they relate to my son who is privileged to attend a immersion school, my other daughter does LOTE in a more mainstream school and the experiences there are not as good. The very few hours a week mean that there is little real incremental learning and they have little exposure to native speakers. Generally I believe that language teaching is undervalued and therefore poorly done. There is not enough rigor and it is too often an opt out option.

My experience this year with the immersion school has been stunning with all teachers being native speakers and overseas trained. I have seen the vast and rapid improvements all round in my son's general academic performance. While after three terms he is not fluent, he is very comfortable with the idea of another language and snippets are creeping into everyday use.

I hope this survey goes places because Australians have a huge language deficit to make up

 **2** [At our school, Sacred Heart Primary School in Pearce, there is not a language program for other languages and I would love for my children to learn another language.](#)

 **3** The key issue facing my child with respect to learning languages is the lack of qualified and experienced teachers. All the children at my child's school suffer from this issue. The whole area of language teaching becomes too hard for the school as they cannot get or keep language teachers for more than a term or two before they move on to something else (this is not an issue in any other core subject).

For Australians (indeed anyone) to better appreciate and understand other people / nationalities, and to enhance their communication skills, a knowledge of other languages is critical. It doesn't really matter what other languages are learnt because my experience shows that just by simply knowing another language brings a new and positive dimension to communication and understanding of others, because the thought processes tend to be different to your native language.

✍ 4 I strongly support languages being taught at school. My children are in pre-school and are learning Spanish but it is incorporated into their normal discussions, not as a set class. I find this method stimulates their involvement and makes them less shy about using new words in another language. This should make it easier for them later on when they learn a language in a more structured environment.

✍ 5 It was unfortunate that there were not enough students to allow for separate classes for continuing and beginning students of the language that my son was studying so the classes were combined to the detriment of everybody concerned. My son lost interest and I'm sure the teacher found it very difficult to teach two levels in one class.

✍ 6 My son has not chosen to study a language. He has difficulty understanding English grammar/spelling, which is probably a factor.

✍ 7 One of my children is in a limited Mandarin immersion program in a public primary school in the ACT. The program came into being because of significant efforts by parents and the local community, supported by a receptive and supportive principal at the time the program was introduced. It has constantly been undermined for the past 7 years, by:

- * lack of ongoing funding commitment, so each year, we have to struggle to find the funds for it, and the ACT Dept of Education being singularly unsupportive despite their public rhetoric about language learning and particularly Asian language learning; The same lack of commitment also means we struggle to get quality teachers for the program;


- * changes in principals with some principals having been very unsupportive of the program - why does the ACT Dept of Education appoint a principal who does not support immersion programs in primary schools to head a school with such a program? Fortunately, once again, this year, we have a supportive principal;

- * members of the teaching staff of the school undermining the program, eg telling parents that their children's learning will suffer if they are in the immersion program. Most of the staff who have made such statements have had no training themselves in language teaching, or any understanding of the interaction between language learning and learning in other areas of the curriculum, with their statements to parents being made on the basis of their beliefs and anecdotal evidence, not supported by data obtained even within the school itself, let alone in academic studies!


- * refusal by the ACT Government to take up offers from the Chinese government of fully-funded teachers because they do not meet ACT Dept of Education employment requirements for teachers;


- * no coordination with the high school in the area for students who have


undertaken the immersion program in the primary school to continue either immersion studies at high school or at the very least advanced LOTE classes, thus after 6 years of immersion in Mandarin, when they go to year 7 at the high school down the road, they are only able to join a beginner's Mandarin class staffed by a non-native speaker


 **8** This survey assumes that all my children are at the same school. In that respect the survey is flawed.

I have a child at Telopea Park, a child at Mawson, and another about to enter Telopea Park in the ACT. I am much more comfortable with the quality of the languages program at Telopea than I am with the one at Mawson. Telopea offers a full immersion program and Mawson is still largely offering extended LOTE. I have answered the above questions with regard to Mawson.

 **9** While I have answered the above survey for my daughter's current school, I would like to comment on immersion classes which she participated in in primary school. The person who set the program up was exceptionally gifted and talented. However, there is a necessary commitment as with everything for those colleagues, principals and the system to support and maintain expertise. I do not think this was the case for us as we had a photocopy technician who was Chinese teaching the kids. Entirely inappropriate.

 **10** The Education Department in the ACT generally under estimates the value of learning another language and does not provide the leadership and resources necessary to deliver good language programs in ACT schools. Learning language under the LOTE program i.e. 1 to 2 lessons a week is grossly inadequate. Our daughter has experienced an immersion program which has produced wonderful outcomes for her language and cultural learning experience.

 **11** I think languages should be compulsory through high school. I think a number of different languages should be offered at all levels to give more choices.

 **12** I would like to see Spanish more widely available in Australian schools. It is a very widely spoken language, not as difficult as some Asian languages to learn and is useful for travelling.

✍ 13 My daughter is at a school which teaches Mandarin. I am unable to assist and have no interest myself in learning Mandarin, although I am extremely interested in languages, am fluent in Dutch and have some competency in Italian, Indonesian, Swedish and French. Availability of quality, qualified teachers in Mandarin is an ongoing issue. I certainly support bilingual education and believe strongly, as a parent AND teacher, that the current ad hoc, albeit compulsory, approach to LOTE is of minimal benefit to most students and potentially has a negative impact on their ongoing interest in learning another language.

I also teach at a bilingual school (Italian - Lyons Primary) where English and Maths are taught in English and all other subject areas in Italian. The speed with which children develop proficiency at Italian is amazing. I certainly support a more intensive approach to teaching a limited number of languages throughout Australia to ensure staffing and resource issues are sustainable. I also support the teaching of "easier" languages such as Indonesian or Italian or Spanish as then genuine and useful fluency can be developed.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

✍ 14 I have 2 children, one now in year 7 and one in year 5. They both started off in the same primary school where Japanese was taught from year one on I think. They enjoyed the Japanese and there was support from the local high school. However the teacher went on extended sick leave and it was not possible to replace the teacher. The school tried to for almost a year I recall. It was then decided by the board to allocate those resources to science.

My eldest child changed primary schools in year 5. That school taught Greek. There was a strong relationship with the Greek community. The teacher struggled with teaching year 5 though I think as there was a lot of turnover in the classes with new children arriving and some children leaving. Most of the new children had not learnt Greek before so the teacher had to accommodate new students along with students who had been studying Greek for a number of years.

This situation would not be uncommon and effective strategies are needed for teachers to be able to cope and teach effectively in this situation.

✍ 15 My daughter is in a special immersion programme in the ACT in Mandarin which was a community initiative. It has been running for about 8 years and has had a somewhat rocky history for a number of reasons, including: changing personnel at both teacher and principal level, lack of resources (including funding), lack of support at the departmental level (at

times) and the small size of the school reducing flexibility for the school. However, having said that the programme is still running after 8 years although somewhat modified for the older students from the original plan. There is no appropriate level follow-on for high school which is an issue. I can't help feeling that if we were committed as a nation to the teaching of second languages to young children and saw the value of this then the programme would not have had to encounter as many problems. I find our arrogance in assuming that to be able to speak English is all we need as a nation is both narrow-minded and exceedingly short-sighted. I am only pleased that our daughter has had this opportunity to be part of an immersion-style programme and so develop good language skills in another language at an early age - any new language she tackles will be easy by comparison.

Strengthening of language teaching in schools - the list of things that could happen is so long that I will just list a few: national commitment to a multi-lingual society, funding for programmes, immersion classes at primary school level, good training for teachers and other staff (principals and bureaucrats), anything and everything!

 **16** I think that we should not forget the languages of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of Australia.

Nor should we forget the many languages of Music - surely the last of all priorities in the Australian education systems, yet wonderful for self esteem and suitable also for special needs students.


One does not need to be immersed in a language to appreciate its scope.

Language and Music are part of EVERY culture, and should not be disassociated from the learning of the culture behind the language. So even if only hints of a language are provided during the study of subjects other than language, the learning of terms, script and structure of languages, ancient or modern, promotes cultural awareness, reduces racism and stereotyping, and is a step toward peace, tolerance and reconciliation.

My family and I are all bilingual, migrated to Australia in 1988 and love this Country. We have all studied several different languages at school, both European and Asian. In total we speak, or are aware of, at least 7 European and East-European languages, 5 Indo-Asian languages, 2 Middle-Eastern languages, and 3 ancient languages and their scripts, and are aware of the Aboriginal language groups in and beyond our area.

Even though we are low-income, thus disadvantaged, this openness and respect for all cultures we have taught our children is making them successful in all aspects of their social, school and work life.


Thank you for the opportunity of taking part in your survey.

 **17** There are two points I would like to make in closing.


First, several of the questions as posed lack in internal logic. For example, the statement "The Language learning program in my child's school is provided over a semester only, and hinders consistency in my child's language progress" cannot properly be answered within the given spectrum of possible responses, because if the language learning curriculum is spread over the whole year then no relevant response can be made, especially regarding the subordinate clause.


Second, I am bewildered that in most of the 62 statements to which responses are desired the word "languages" is begun with a capital, indicating that those who designed this survey have had little or no proper tuition in the use of proper nouns and the like.

In view of the above one must certainly conclude that better teaching and learning is indeed required in both foreign languages and in English grammar in Australian schools, and also in logic. Maybe a return to the trivium and the quadrivium would be a good idea?


 **18** My child no longer studies a language. He was put off in Years 7, 8 and 9 due to overcrowded class (34) where many students had not achieved their first preference and were disruptive for those who were genuinely interested in learning another language.

My personal experience is that a European language greatly improves the use of Grammar in English and on the other side, good understanding of English grammar is required to get the best out of European language study.


 **19** It is important for all children to be literate in their mother tongue before adding other written language to their curriculum but all children should be exposed to oral/aural languages from a very early age. There should be more support for children with specific learning disabilities, especially reading disabilities, so they too can benefit from learning another language - ie more help to teach them to read and write in English first.

 **20** I'd like to see Mawson Primary and Melrose High offering a full immersion program in Mandarin, and a high school following on from Lyons Primary's Italian immersion program.


I think this survey needs redesigning, as it assumes all my children go to the same school. My children are learning French and Mandarin and do not attend the same schools.

 **21** I am generally dissatisfied with the teaching of Languages (Indonesian only) at my school:

1. We have one teacher who teaches over 600 pupils each week.
 2. As far as I know my children cannot continue the study of Indonesian at a local Catholic high school. There is thus little incentive for the children or parents to regard Indonesian as little more than 'something nice' to fill in part of the day.
 3. The emphasis seems to be on culture, songs, dance, food etc. with little evidence of grammar being learned and only basic vocabulary. My son in Year 5 seems to know not much more Indonesian than his brother in Year 3. When I ask them to give me a basic sentence in Indonesian they don't know how to work it out.
 4. No Indonesian home work is assigned.
 5. No Indonesian readers come home, nor are there many Indonesian language resources in the school library.
 6. There is no opportunity for parents who don't themselves know Indonesian to assist their children in learning the language.
-

 **22** I believe that a language should be taught from pre-school and then this particular language is consistently followed right through until senior high school when the student can make a decision about whether or not to continue. Currently children are taught bits and pieces of lots of different languages, this is confusing. Couldn't each year starting in pre-school be 'assigned' a language? It would mean schools would have multi-aged groups in a particular language but this would encourage peer support etc. I have read that learning one language makes learning another language easier so once a language is learnt a student may choose to learn a different one in senior high school.

Young children learn everything quicker and easier and language could be incorporated into their English program. Being bi-lingual in Australia is important because we are isolated and it is important children learn about the wider world and language is a great way to do that.

 **23** I'm quite happy for my child to learn a language. However my concerns are thus:

- which language? my preference is for Indonesian (Bahasa in particular), which he learns at his current primary school. Indonesian is also offered at the

high school he will attend. I have a difficulty with children studying a language through primary that will not be offered past primary.


- language and understanding of other cultures. I can see the correlation between my child studying a language and understanding another cultural. But that's just one culture of many. why not a broader area of study over a diverse selection of cultures?


- learning English first. My main concern with studying language (particularly in primary) is that as my child is being raised in an English speaking country, he should first and foremost have a very good grasp of the English language - spelling, grammar, reading, speaking etc. I have a friend who's children attended a school that offered French by immersion from Kindy upwards. My friend had to remove one child who could not cope with the two languages and the other child is now in high school and has a terrible time with written English. Her written English is a mix of French and English, her grammar and punctuation is atrocious!

- I have a child who struggled initially with spelling. Excellent reading and comprehension, but could not spell to save himself! However after being tutored (privately) he has now grasped phonics and his spelling is age appropriate and above. Had my son had to cope with more language (other than English) at school, I'm not sure how he would have coped.


- my son is attending a school where he is lucky to be in a Gifted and Talented class and is finally enjoying school and the learning process. My son's school is due to merge with an Italian language immersion program school early next year. Consequently the G&T program he is part of is now under threat. Personally I see longer term gain educational for my child as part of an extension program than I do from him learning Italian.

I would rather my child study a VARIETY of different cultures over his schooling life.


 **24** Our Primary School has the same Language being taught as the High School that my child is likely to be going. The continuity of the same language is a good thing.


 **25** My understanding is that children at our school are quiet confused by languages as one semester of each year is a different language. One of my children has done the same language for the last two years (two semesters) and has not really learnt a lot about it. Teachers are taught or self taught languages (to their credit) which also makes it difficult. It is confusing also when starting High School and one of the languages taught at High School is

not one that they have been learning at Primary School although it is the one they would like to try. Should it not be certain languages that follow on through to High Schools? Languages taught at Primary Schools only appear to be what certain teachers have knowledge or access too and are not really relevant to ongoing school curriculum.

 **26** My child's school only offers Language for one term each year. The language studied will depend on the 'expertise' of the regular class teacher. Even though my child enjoys these classes, and even though I am happy that some language study is provided, only the very basics are ever covered. Since my child started school, he has had a token introduction to Italian, Auslan, Spanish and Indonesian. It may give him some idea of which language he may like to learn at High School (if available) but has done very little to develop any further than the very basics in each of the languages.


At the very least, I would prefer to see him study one language for the whole year. Other schools nominate one language and study it all year, every year. This has its advantages (learning the language more thoroughly) but does not give options to try other languages.


 **27** It is too early for me to see any real benefits in the language program. All I know is that my son drags his feet to his language classes and he bemoans having them for a whole day. I cannot say that he enjoys them as much as other subjects. All students are different and at the end of the day I am trusting that it will be of benefit to him.


 **28** Reporting of progress has not been satisfactory with any of my children. Based on interviews, I was led to believe that their progress was adequate; however a private independent assessment has led us to require our three children to undertake additional private tuition. I believe more objective (and truthful) reporting, would have benefited all of my children.


Both of the schools which my children attend place significant emphasis on English and the cultural component of a second language. Less emphasis is put on actually learning the (second) language itself.

Teaching of languages is essential, especially the country's first, primary language, as it is the means by which business, the law, and information in general is communicated. A second language provides children with a wider understanding of the world and communication. The analytical approach in some languages can assist in other subjects such as mathematics. The concentration on teaching of second languages should be balanced against the need for knowledge in other subjects.

 **29** My child goes to a bilingual public school in Lyons. Our school has a strong focus on learning Italian and about its culture. This year, our first bi-annual trip to Italy happened and was a huge success. The children were immersed in the culture and community, we have a sister school in Italy and are hoping they will plan a trip every two years to fit in with our off year. We have children in our school from all cultural backgrounds and this is our second year as a bilingual school so our program is still young and developing. I don't think that our state government values the educational benefits of a bilingual school as they are looking to limit our school in 2008 to Year 3. Our trip to Italy is planned for children in 5th and 6th class as by that stage they should be speaking fluent Italian. The state government has all children do some kind of exam to see what benchmark the schools are at. Our school children rated quite highly, which we think shows that learning another language not only broadens their minds but helps them take in information so they think more lateral. Please contact me if you wish. (Contact details supplied)


 **30** I have completed this survey as a parent of children in the ACT for this year. However for the past 5 yrs we were in Melbourne and our school had Japanese teachers on exchange and the language and Japanese culture were a very large part of our school learning. It was a fantastic experience for the children and they discussed with us regularly the language lessons, what they made, cooked etc. We also had a sister school in Japan whom the children wrote to and 2nd yearly the chance for grade 5/6 to go over on excursion. This year in the ACT there is nothing remotely like it at my school and completing the survey highlighted this for me. Thank you


 **31** The comments above are affected by the fact that my son attends a bilingual program. His experience with language learning has been very good. His four older siblings have all studied LOTE in the primary years and the experience was poor. Two of his older siblings studied LOTE in high school without the smorgasbord approach and had good experiences with on continuing her language to tertiary level and studying other languages. The child who was subjected to the smorgasbord in high school soon abandoned language study. It was not considered serious

 **32** At our school very little time each week is devoted to language. Some terms a teacher cannot be found. By the end of Year 6 my son can ask a handful of basic questions in Indonesian. Really in 7 years of school he has learnt what anyone could teach themselves in a couple of months of study at home before going on a holiday. In my opinion if you are going to teach a

language then teach it so the children become fluent. This requires several hours a week devoted to the language and homework as well. Otherwise what is the point? Also the independent high school my son will attend next doesn't offer Indonesian. If he did like the language and wanted to continue he can't. He has to take French for two years. French will be another language he doesn't learn enough of to speak fluently. Our family background is Greek. Although the high school offers 5 or 6 languages, Greek is not an option. If it was we could help him learn it and become fluent.


We recently travelled to Greece and from year 3 to the end of primary school all Greek children become fluent in English. Then in high school they learn French or German or both. If they can teach it well in Greece we should be able to in Australia. Our facilities are so much better than in Greece. Our system is failing us.

 **33** I believe more schools should become immersion schools like Lyons Primary School and schools that are immersion schools should receive more backing (funding and other resources) from the government.

 **34** a) We are incredibly lucky here in Canberra to have several schools with bilingual immersion programs, one of which my children attend. They are achieving native speaker competence and are being exposed to different teaching styles and curriculum.


b) More generally, from the perspective of schools ACT-wide, I am a little concerned about the lack of importance given to language learning in the Essential Learning Achievements specified in the ACT's draft Curriculum framework which is currently being trialled in 20 schools in Canberra. There is only one Essential Learning Achievement which relates to language learning, namely, 'the student understands and values human diversity' - and it does not even mention gaining competence in a language as desirable skill. My concern is that languages may simply not be offered in schools as they attempt to cover the ELAs through other areas of the curriculum.

c) Regarding funding at a national level - I regret the phasing out of NALSAS funding under the present government, as I think that program helped to establish the learning of Asian languages within schools.

 **35** My daughter attends an Italian bilingual immersion school in the ACT. Our family has had no previous experience with language immersion but I am pleased to report that we have been very impressed with the rate of her progress since starting at the school at the beginning of this year, 9 months ago.

My only comments in regards to the strengthening of language education in Australian public schools would be:

- 1) immersion is a very successful method of teaching a second language;
- 2) language education should begin before the child reaches the age of 7, as studies show that fluency is far more achievable if study begins by then;
- 3) ideally, the same language should continue through primary and secondary school;
- 4) the languages to be studied in Australian public schools should be those used officially by the United Nations and/or those used by the largest of the non-English speaking populations within Australia.

 **36** I think that schools often fail to take advantage of the skills and expertise of their parent community in their language (and other) programs. For languages, this is sometimes because there are no skills in the community, in which case, one wonders why the school is teaching that particular language. For example, our school teaches Indonesian, probably because they were able to find (or perhaps already had) an ESL teacher who can also teach Indonesian. But I don't think there are any Indonesian families in the school. It's better than French or German, but if they had chosen Mandarin, or Vietnamese, for example, they would have many native speakers among the parents, who would probably be quite willing to come in to the school to be involved in the language classes. They could also access the support of the weekend community language schools which exist here.

I think it makes a lot of sense for a school to look at its surrounding community when deciding what language to teach, and selecting a language which already "exists" in that community. That would give the school a base of expertise and potential volunteers for the language itself, and the cultural side of things as well, instead of it all resting on the language teacher. It also gives the language more immediate relevance to the students if they hear it being spoken by parents of their classmates, and it supports those parents to bring up their children bilingually - something which is encouraged in theory, but for which there is little practical support or guidance. It would also help those communities, typically the newer migrants, in which the children stop speaking their home language as soon as they get to school because they want to "fit in". These children end up being able to understand, but not speak, their language and once they get into late teens / early twenties, they often really regret that their parents were not more insistent on them speaking their home language.

I'm happy to discuss any of these thoughts further.


✍ 37 I have included a few "Don't Know" answers because my oldest child is in Kindy with a teacher who loves languages - I am not confident that in future years the school will support language training. It is pot luck as to which teacher we get.

✍ 38 I believe that most, if not all Australians would take advantage of the opportunity to learn a language other than English if given the opportunity to access a quality program. Appreciation of one's own language could surely only be enhanced by exposure to other grammatical structures and phonemes for comparison and benchmarking. This would also apply to children who are having difficulty with English, perhaps learning a second language could help to unlock doors by reinforcing language concepts and offering the opportunity to learn a language in the reverse order, written, then spoken then conceptual.


It is difficult to see how learning a second language, provided the standard and mode of delivery is accessible, engaging, relevant and of a high standard can be in any way detrimental to any person, whatever their age.


✍ 39 Children with specific language impairment or a language learning disorder should not be forced to participate in learning languages other than English. Often these children are already struggling making sense of English vocabulary and syntax. Sometimes two languages exposure can be confusing. I think it is fair to introduce the notion that there is more to communication than just "English", and thus broaden children's knowledge of the world and its culture - language and culture are interlinked. But I do not support the notion that learning languages other than English be compulsory.


ACT Students said.....


 **1** I am currently studying French and I enjoy it very much. It is very rewarding and taught well at our school. I consider French to be relevant to my future and I apply myself well.


I would like to see perhaps a little more time given in our timetables to allow for learning this subject. It would also help if replacement teachers were able to teach the language.

 **2** I think all schools should have bilingual programs to help learn a language faster.

 **3** My school very strongly encourages the learning of different languages. I LOVE LEARNING DIFFERENT LANGUAGES!!!!

 **4** Radford has a very strong language program. Many students participate, and the teachers are very talented.

 **5** It would be nice if the students and the parents could have more say in what we do for our language curriculum. Because there are some areas that we should be learning about that we are not. More cultural ideas instead of just speaking French every lesson. We should also go out and do more excursions to the French Embassy or French Bakeries to learn more about the French Food. The opinions of the students should also be recognised because we do not get much say in what we learn. Students need to have fun in classes as well as learning; otherwise we are not going to elect the language subjects the following years.

 **6** The Language layout is very thorough and helps to make sense of English structure. The language program at my school is based to make you think over a long period of time helping you to remember and help your revision practices.


✍ 7 Learning a language is a great experience, and will benefit me in later life. Knowledge of other languages is very useful when non-English speaking people come into contact with you. I have been learning French for 3 years now, I am now in year 9 and I hope to continue with this until year 12.

✍ 8 The way French is taught at Radford College is very good.


✍ 9 I think that more thought should be given to the languages that are really important, ie the languages that are spoken most often like Chinese and ones that are most often required of workers. For example at the moment being fluent in Chinese opens lots of career paths and I think that before choosing which languages should be taught at schools these factors need to be thought about.


✍ 10 I think that French in Radford College is very good, we learn French about 3 1/2 hours and we are offered French trips in Year 10. Overall, I have had a fun, enjoyable time learning French and I think it is a skill that I will continue to use at home and I will probably travel to France and use the skill I have learnt here.


ACT Language Teachers said.....


 **1** Mobility continues to be a contentious issue in the ACT. Language teachers are concerned that not only will the school lose its language program when the teacher is required to move but that the teacher who has given considerable time, effort and financial commitment to their chosen teaching area will be forced into a mainstream position.

The number of schools who have lost their language teacher and subsequently their language program continues to grow. The number of schools available to teachers as possible new sites for employment is extremely limited in the primary sector, particularly if we factor in the ratio of part time and full time positions.

 **2** I am working in the senior secondary sector where every subject is in effect an elective. Many of my answers relate to my professional opinion based on previous work in both the primary and high school sectors. Questions like no. 178 are very loaded: many teachers who stick to teaching languages have worked out what they can do: they have gained either the respect of the school, a valued position in the school or they are just doing their job. The job of all teachers is very difficult, the main problem is that many teachers of languages do not have other colleagues that can support them in coming up with strategies or innovative ideas.

 **3** I am interested to know if the parent organisations sponsoring this study have asked the Prime Minister, John Howard about a commitment he made a few years back where he said by certain year (2000 and something) every Australian student would have the opportunity to learn a second language, particularly in the high school years. It would be interesting to locate this particular speech and send him a copy of his government's promise. Since that time NALSAS (Asian languages) funding has been dropped and now we operate on such minimal funding to support language programs that the school has to fund its own program. With all the other commitments, Principals need to consider whether they can afford to carry a program. I think the importance of language teaching and in fact the inclusion of studies of Asia is poorly supported by the Government- a very short sighted view considering the region we live in. Basically schools need more money to support programs, programs which should be established in the early years and be able to be continued through high school and college sectors. At the moment it is very difficult for a student to continue language learning in the same language from one sector to another.

 4 Language teachers need make extra effort to retain or develop the program; unlike English and Maths counterparts.


 5 How languages in schools could be strengthened;
Language teachers are well aware of the benefits of learning a second language. However there seems to be a continuing attitude in the community that learning a language is difficult. This attitude needs to be addressed. This can be addressed through making languages visible throughout the school as well as in the community. This could be achieved through newsletter columns, highlighting achievements, involving students in cultural activities, notice boards, announcements at assembly, displaying student work throughout the school as well as in the local library.

I also believe that people simply do not think about languages. They don't understand the reasons for wanting to study another language. If you can make languages visible, interactive and interesting the community will change their view towards languages.

Another major issue with retention rates is students become demotivated with their language learning. The course moves too slowly for them and they do not feel they are progressing with their language. Also there isn't a smooth transition from one year to the next so many students find themselves repeating topics. There needs to be greater communication between schools particularly in the transition years. Also the high schools in the ACT do not have a set course document to work from so there are inconsistencies between schools. This makes it difficult for college teachers to address each student's individual needs.

Lastly, there seems to be enough interest in languages in high school however when students come to college they are faced with a range of choices and hence decide not to continue with their language. This is a major issue. I think the only way this can be addressed is for college teachers to be active in high schools promoting languages. College students and high school students could interact with each other in an attempt to build stronger ties and a smoother transition.

I would be interested in following up these issues
(Contact details supplied)

 6 If the study of a language was made compulsory to Year 10, students would have a more serious attitude to the subject.
There needs to be more coordination between primary and secondary schools. Primary school language teachers are often overworked and they do not have enough time allocated to help their students make significant progress.

✍ 7 I believe that parental support for language learning is crucial to the success and viability of language classes. Students whose parents encourage them to forgo language homework or study in favour of the 'more important' subjects have this attitude instilled in them, leading to the behaviour and other problems that are regularly of concern in language classrooms, along with a lowering of levels of attainment.

I also believe there must be a great deal more coordination between the different sectors of schooling, to ensure continuity in approach even if not in the language itself, when students move from primary to secondary school. Secondary teachers in my experience, tend not to have adapted their quite academic, grammatical approach since the introduction of languages in many primary schools, leaving students confused and disillusioned when their expectations of continuing the participatory, activity-based language lessons of primary school (often more heavily focussed on culture and lifestyle than language) are not met; rather, they face textbooks, grammatical structures and long lists of vocabulary. Conversely, upper primary teachers could take a more grammatical approach to better prepare students for the realities and requirements of more advanced language learning.

✍ 8 Within our College we are blessed with fluent speakers in Japanese, French, Italian and German. Languages are well supported by the Principal and the Executive, and a triennial rolling programme of overseas Study Tours into France, Italy and Japan have reinforced the value of learning a language just for itself.

ICT support is excellent within the College, but access is not always there so as to facilitate ICT as a natural part of student learning.

I am concerned about the lack of fluency of students who come to learn how to teach their chosen language. They are not well supported by the local facilitating bodies and we are can be left to pick up the pieces. This aspect of language education concerns me the most. Where is our future base?

In conclusion, languages are well regarded by the majority of our Parent and student body.
(Contact details supplied)

✍ 9 The government MUST match the rhetoric with the necessary funding. Principals MUST understand the importance of language learning.

✍ 10 If one does not know/ appreciate another languages/cultures then he or she does not know his/her own culture very well. How can we enrich ourselves and increase our high thinking order (cognitive development) if we continue to be narrow minded and refuse to accept or appreciate the values and morels of another cultures. If we are not open to different way of thinking and different ways of doing things, then how can we move to this third place where people of different backgrounds have the opportunity to negotiate and reach a compromise. In our multicultural society this point is crucial; we need to try to make people understand that all cultures have something to offer and value. We should teach learners how to acquire the best aspects of the different cultures exposed to us, so that, we can enrich our own and be proud of who we are - a diversity of cultures.

✍ 11 Languages will only flourish when they have a protected place within the curriculum. It is ridiculous that languages have to compete with other subjects such as Commerce, Music, Visual Arts, and in some schools even with History and Geography.

✍ 12 Some ideas to strengthen Languages programs in Primary schools:
1. Compulsory Language training unit included in all teacher's pre-service courses. Languages will not be acknowledged as valuable to our curriculum if we as teachers cannot speak other languages.

2. Compulsory timetabling of Languages teaching in primary classrooms stipulated eg 3 x 45 minutes per week.

3. Parents and community members accessed increasingly to provide classroom resources and to design meaningful Languages programs.

4. Federal learning objects created for European languages, not just Asian ones.

5. National pressure placed on state and territory bodies to support Language teaching. There should be national statements of learning for Languages.

6. Resource extensive studies which can demonstrate the intellectual benefit of learning Languages. The first part of the resourcing would have to be teaching!

We are the most multicultural, monolingual country in the world. This has to change.

✍ 13 Please note that I teach Latin; therefore some of the questions do not have the correct perspective and are geared to Modern Language teaching. Our senior students sit the NSW HSC and so my teaching is more directly linked to NSW support and information and the Classical Languages Teachers' Association which provides excellent support. I strongly believe that Latin like other languages can help students with their own language and that it supports cultural and historical understanding. I do believe that parents' own experience, their attitudes and aspirations for their children play a significant part in their children's subject choices. Students often need to experience Latin to understand its relevance in the 21st century.

✍ 14 I am very fortunate to teach at a school where languages are strong - we have 4 European and 4 Asian languages, so the number of students taking language classes is high. It is an environment which is very supportive of language teaching, so my opinions may not be very representative of teachers across the ACT.

It would be good to see language teaching in schools strengthened, but making it compulsory can sometimes have a negative effect. It needs to have a higher profile across the board, so that students will see it as useful, interesting, exciting and something they can do.

More computer support for languages teachers would be very useful, as problems with computers are a serious issue when teachers are short of time and may not be able to install programs easily, make sure that everything works and so on.

(Contact details supplied)

✍ 15 My feeling is that, within Australia, there is the assumption that native speakers are automatically the best LOTE teachers. In my experience of 34 years of teaching and as an Inspector of Languages for HM Government in the U.K., this is very rarely the case. There are exceptions, of course, but it concerns me to see so many native speakers training our teachers and teaching our students. The effective training of teachers is crucial if we are to raise the bar on language teaching in Australia.

I feel strongly that LOTE teachers are often a 'lone voice' within schools struggling to come to terms with the practicalities of teaching a very demanding discipline. There should be more opportunities to share good practice amongst consortia of schools. LOTE Advisors with the remit to offer P.D. on a regular basis would be another starting point, provided that they were experienced and successful teachers.

My own experience is very much that, given the right methodology and the appropriate motivation, all students can achieve some success in language

learning and that this is very much down to the teacher, provided he/she has sufficient resources to teach effectively and the confidence to teach in way that will achieve this.

ACT Principals said.....

✍ 1 The quality of the language teachers and their availability has an impact on our school's programs each year. Parents value the opportunity for their children to have a 'language' experience but I don't think it matters which language is available - a quality program will convince a school community of its value whether it is an Asian or European language.

✍ 2 Strengthening language learning would be helped by providing continuity eg from high school to college (ACT system). PS to HS articulation would be good but not essential within the one language - what is important is to provide opportunities for learning a language at all.

Allowing language classes to operate with smaller groups rather "average class sizes" would be great too. Needs to be backed by the community and the Department of Education.

A lot of our problems regarding languages teaching stem from the fact that it is actually [a language] teaching - ie, one subject is French, another German, another Japanese.

One needs to have strong networks and support from within the language, eg German Speakers' Network and the way it supports the teaching of German in the ACT, and for the subject to stand within the full curriculum because it has a rightful place for educationally sound reasons.

✍ 3 I believe that the best way to learn a LOTE is through an immersion model. It seems logical that it is better to have say 10% of graduating students who are very proficient in communicating an another language because they have attended a 50% English/50% LOTE bilingual school rather than even 100% who have a good reading knowledge at best but none of whom are proficient.

I believe that there is generally little imperative in Australia to learn another language because English is seen as the language of the most powerful nation on earth - USA. ie. If we speak the same language we are powerful too and do not need to make the effort to learn other languages. It only makes good sense to follow the leader...

Ideally:


-a LOTE programme in all schools with the possibility of students being able to continue with the same language, K to year 12.

-compulsory languages for all because, although I believe in free choice,

having them as optional devalues language education.

-easy access to bilingual programmes. For ex. in the ACT...2 European and two Asian language schools would probably go well. Good publicising by departments of education regarding value of this type of education.

-a conscious and explicitly stated effort made to not follow 'the leader' but to be enterprising and flexible on world stage ie learn other languages/ways of being


 **4** Language choice is often influenced by the availability of teachers rather than any philosophical or educational commitment, and it can be very difficult to obtain good teachers. Like a number of other areas, the effectiveness and profile of the language program depends heavily on individual teachers. A strong charismatic teacher will increase enrolments and v/v.


There is often also a timetabling problem and competition in senior years where elective languages are programmed against more "inviting" and less academically demanding courses such as dance, ceramics... Perhaps some tertiary incentives such as were once offered in Maths could help

Junior secondary classes of compulsory language studies are often very difficult to manage with negative attitudes from students and parents.


We have found that even where there is an opportunity for students to continue a language from primary to secondary, they often give up their original language and select the new one, thereby negating much of the benefits of extended learning.

Advantages of language learning need to be strongly promoted in the wider community to overcome negative public perceptions and resistance, and energy needs to be put into teacher training and recruitment. There is absolutely no point in running half hearted ineffective programs for the sake of lip service. It is better to have fewer classes and do it well.

 **5** The context of our responses is a binational and bicultural French-Australian school. There is an inherent emphasis on bilingualism from K-10 as well as a strong LOTE program in the high school. There are six languages other than English taught in Years 7-10. The Middle Years Program of the IBO, which is being embedded here also requires students to study two languages, their own and one other.

 **6** Why can't Auslan be regarded as another Language, particularly when some students in the school have both parents who are deaf? We would find this a much more useful learning experience than the foreign language presently being taught.

ACT Language Advisors said.....

 **1** As a language enthusiast and a primary educator, I am appalled at the idea that a language can be taught meaningfully in one period a week - or even in two. If we want to have children gain any degree of mastery (with the concomitant implications such as higher self-esteem, better appreciation of their own language, etc) we have to resource it adequately. There should be specialist language teachers in every primary school; there should be a limited range of languages for primary schools to draw on in a region (say, two Asian; two European; the local indigenous language and one language determined by the ethnic mix of the local community) and there should be a guaranteed life-time (at least five years) before a language is changed. The feeder primary schools should be teaching a language that can be continued in a local high school.

ACT Tertiary Language Teachers said.....

✍ 1 Basic grammar should be taught in primary schools once more, as poor English means poor thinking as well as poor learning of new languages. Some school curricula I have seen are dumbed down, which puts off some youngsters. The topic is too often trivialised. For instance they might be asked to write about their favourite popular singer, not given the option to write about a composer as an alternative. Also the gender bias merely reinforces the idea that this is a girlie subject. Why force them to talk about eg cookery or fashion? Instead let them look say at the political system, the role of religion, the role of the sexes. I know most manuals are pretty awful, stressing tourism for instance and silly fictional characters. Far better to use school manuals from the country/ies, comics etc. Efforts should be made to attract more men teachers and more male students into the area, and making the curricular less perceived as girlie will help. Finally, I wonder if eg reps. of foreign firms/cultural orgs. etc are invited into schools to talk about employment options.

✍ 2 I am an academic at two universities in Canberra and also president of a community group which promotes Mandarin Chinese. In my opinion, increasing and improving the teaching of Mandarin in the schools in the ACT is often put in the 'too hard' basket by the Ed Dept. Too difficult to find and retain trained teachers for example. Not helped of course by the low status of LOTE teaching and teachers in general and often inadequate support within schools and by the department.

At the same time there is a pool of Mandarin speakers (and speakers of other important languages - for families, trade, international relations, social harmony etc etc - out there in our society who are not encouraged to pass on their languages to their own children and to the rest of society. This is an enormous squandering of an immense potential national resource,,

I am happy to be contacted about his issue. (Contact details supplied)

The website of the community group is <http://alma.anu.edu.au>

Appendix 2B - NEW SOUTH WALES

NSW Parents said.....

✍ 1 Having studied a language to HSC level myself I recognise whether teaching methods being used are adequate and whether my child is coping with the language being taught, however, a parent who has never studied a language would have trouble knowing whether their child is effectively learning a language. It is very difficult for a parent to support their child's decision to study a language as there are not as many structures in place for assisting their child such as tutoring. It is therefore most important that information is provided to parents at a school-based level on a regular basis, as this will be the first line of information for parents.

✍ 2 I personally do not know a second language and only studied single semesters of other languages in Years 7 and 8 of high school in 1979 and 1980; Latin, French and Indonesian if my memory serves me correctly. I was always envious of other people who learned second languages from their parents or in their early years as they picked it up so easily.

I have two children currently in Infants at a state school. There are no language classes at all in this primary school as far as I am aware. However both children thoroughly enjoyed learning about a country in a multicultural exercise at school which included learning a song in a second language. They both picked up the song very easily and therefore I think primary school starting in infants is the correct place for children to start learning a second language.

The language chosen should be a largely spoken one. So the children can master it, the same language should be continued for at least a year I would think although I'm not a teacher.


The only problem I see with this is the teaching time restraints. Currently the school at which my children attend have too many extra curricular activities and would not have time for this. As a thought, a good place to start would be to use the Release from Face to Face time for such and activity.


Sorry for rambling on.


✍ 3 Parents should be surveyed as to which languages they would most like taught and feeder PS should link in. Many native speaker parents are not given any opportunity to share their valuable expertise, enthusiasm and


resources.

I also feel very strongly that 'native speaker' HSC courses (limited to a few, mostly Asian languages) are extremely discriminatory and actually discourage students. It is a myth to think that students with one or both parents as native speakers means that their child picks up the language through osmosis- it's actually a hard slog and no different to a child with parent musicians who make their child study an instrument and music all their lives.


 **4** Specific, directed funding for LOTE programs in pre-schools and in primary schools would be extremely beneficial. Employment of a LOTE teacher in each school would make an enormous difference to how language programs run and to how effective they are, as well as improving community perception of the importance of LOTE.


 **5** As the parent of two small boys, I have seen both of them learn basic Indonesian in year 1. This has only come about due to the fact that one of the year one teachers at the school has a knowledge of the Indonesian language. My oldest boy seems to have an aptitude for picking up other languages as he also studies musicianship (which I consider another language), and as a result of this small exposure to another language, he MAY take up another language as an elective in high school. My younger boy does not appear to have the same ability to process different thought patterns and therefore the time he has spent learning Indonesian would have been better spent learning English. It is with this in mind that some sort of basic skills/aptitude testing in early primary years may prove beneficial in planting a seed for further voluntary language studies later on down the education track. Having said this, I am strongly opposed to compulsory foreign language studies in our school system as it is a lifestyle choice and not an educational necessity.
(Contact details supplied)

 **6** I would like our Australian schools to involve more languages in their curriculum. At the moment I hear German, French and Greek taught in our schools. Punjabi, Urdu, Persian, Chinese, Arabic and Hindi are the other languages which I would like to be taught.
Thank You for organising this survey.

 **7** I don't think sufficient time is given in the school timetable to language study. One 40 minute lesson a week is a great introduction but does not allow for continuity of learning and maximum impact of the program's objectives. There is also seems to be little integration of the language study to the rest of

the children's education. I think class teachers see language lessons as a good opportunity for a 40 minute break whilst the Language teacher has students.

 8 My kids have had disjointed language education. A bit of Japanese, a bit of French, a bit of Indonesian. Enough to spark an interest but not enough to be proficient. When my kids went to Japanese classes, they were offered at their state school for a fee after school. The principal said this met the schools requirement to provide the opportunity for languages, but it was exclusive of the families who couldn't pay or pick there children up late after the school buses had left. I have kids in catholic and State schools and unfortunately I find the Catholic schools are more cohesive and consistent.

 9 I have answered these questions as a grandmother. I have four grandsons one of whom is in secondary and another in primary school. I am currently working as a technical adviser on an AusAID project and have previously worked for the UN.

Numbers of students studying languages dropped dramatically when a language was no longer a prerequisite for university entry.

If Australia is to take its place in the region we must have an understanding of the languages and peoples of our region. The current problems of the army and police sent to East Timor arising from an ignorance of language (a major regional language like Indonesian or Malay would be fine) and culture are a case in point.


To see Australians working on projects overseas, proudly declare they have been in that particular country for 10 years or more, then go on to apologise for not speaking the language, is a humiliation, and contrary to the attitudes of people in the target countries.

The current subject selection procedure in high schools pits subjects against one another and negative comments from teachers in competing subject areas do not support continuity of language study.

In my experience language teachers are among the hardest working in a secondary school and, need to be, to maintain student numbers in the face of strong competition for students by all elective subject areas.


Students seem to be unaware that in the current era of globalisation a working ability in a regional language will be able to enhance their job prospects.

(Contact details supplied)

 **10** At our school the languages program is an out of school hours program that is run entirely by a committee of volunteer parents, who recruit languages teachers and run everything from enrolments to ensuring children get to classes on the day...


The principal has consistently opposed including any sort of language component in school hours learning, and actively denigrates the program by refusing to consult with the parent committee (he leaves this to his more sympathetic deputy) and by complaining about 'behaviour problems' that are only apparent to him... (one minor incident and suddenly the entire program is apparently out of control...)


In contrast, annual surveys of parents with children in our program draw enthusiastic responses (and many thanks), and this entirely volunteer-run program now has 80 of the 500 children in the school participating in eight classes across four languages...in before and after school time slots.

 **11** My child attends a public primary school where languages are not offered in any form as part of the curriculum. My child has undertaken language classes at after hours classes at the school organised by the P&C. These classes have been fantastic but suffer from all the disadvantages of not being part of the school curriculum in terms of teacher quality, assessment of class effectiveness, difficulty for parents in arranging attendance, additional cost, fluctuation in class size, disruptions to continuity when teachers leave.


I would like to see it made compulsory for public primary schools to make language classes in some form available (as well as other key learning activities such as music). The curriculum is very narrow and the strictures of departmental requirements are used as an excuse not to undertake important learning activities. The availability of languages in schools is currently at the whim of the principal which is an unsatisfactory position for parents who want to access their local school.


(Contact details supplied)

 **12** I feel that if the language program was included in the normal school day, more children would enjoy and benefit from learning another language. I think it promotes understanding and compassion for non English speaking persons.

 **13** Learning languages provides additional skills which may later be useful in gaining life experiences, however, the purpose/s of learning a


language should clearly identified so that students will be aware of HOW learning a language may be useful later in life, eg. useful for tourism, hospitality industries, management etc. And also the likelihood that the particular language may be useful, more so than another language, eg French is spoken or understood by many Europeans, and also internationally, Japanese will be handy in international trade for some industries and tourism industry in Queensland. Whatever language is offered - it should be made clear HOW that language can be of use.

 **14** Language learning is not done in my child's school because they do not have the funds to fund a teacher specifically for that. They were learning Italian but they had to stop it. My child was very disappointed.


 **15** Some of the questions weren't directly applicable to my experience. For example, I don't know if my child's school has reviewed its language program.

In Australia, it is difficult for students with no Language other than English in their family background or community network to learn a language. Travel opportunities are limited and expensive, and media exposure is uncommon (unlike in Europe). Intensive language learning in primary school is the only realistic way to overcome the problems of isolation and lack of access to HEARING other languages. Immersion schools would be excellent but are unlikely to be provided, especially in country areas. For students who genuinely wish to learn another language, the opportunities in country areas are NOT strong. We have had a very successful exchange experience with one of our three children and it is only because of this experience that his language skills have developed.


Part of the problem with school language learning is definitely the lack of sufficient time spent on it. Many lessons are spent on culture rather than language, so the actual number of lessons is very small (hence progress is very slow).


 **16** I believe that languages other than English could be taught in schools by some of the parents supporting teachers who come from other than English speaking countries, as most parents, mainly mothers are up at schools on a regular basis either picking up or delivering their children to their schools by involving parents from these back grounds, it would help them to feel a part of the community which sometimes they feel left out of. A basic guideline could be set down by the Dept of Education with very simple rules and a step by step programme laid out - remember the kiss system all would


benefit.

 17 Language lessons need to be ongoing. Not just for a semester.

I am very disappointed with the language curriculum at my child's school. I believe it is extremely important for a child to learn a language consistently, particularly with the relationship between Australia and Asia. This should be followed up in high school. could there be funding for a teacher to come to the school once a week for the day, to teach each class a language, ensuring that the teacher is fully qualified and it is seen as a serious subject.

 18 Our family has hosted exchange students recently and the amount of languages that they can speak has amazed us. We are of the opinion that languages should be taught in primary school at an early age so when high school is reached where languages are offered as elective subjects the students are better prepared. Knowing another language would greatly enhance employment opportunities as the world has become closer regarding economy. Better interaction between high schools and primary schools would be beneficial to ensure a smooth transition from primary to high school. For example both schools should offer the same languages and if the same teacher was able to teach at both schools this would offset the shortage of qualified teachers and the teacher would have a better understanding of the students capabilities.


 19 I personally feel that learning another language is imperative to a better understanding of different races. Australia is such a multicultural society people need to be aware of the difficulties facing people who come to live here with a language other than English. There is no better educator than experience.
(Contact details supplied)

 20 Our family has relocated from another state into NSW. We have found the curriculum in NSW varies from our other state. This is both confusing and enlightening. Previously we have had the opportunity of studying a language, both Italian and Japanese, and our children all enjoyed the language and learning of these countries. In our current school there are no extra languages on offer.

We find this disappointing in many respects.

Our wonderful Nation would benefit greatly from a National Curriculum. This would include languages, sporting and the Three R arenas.

Thank you for the opportunity to participate.
There should be more funding for immersion programs in schools. Those schools could then take up the responsibility for providing LOTE services for non-immersion schools.

 **21** One of the questions that seemed to need improvement was the one that said
"Students who struggle with English should not have to learn another language". In my child's case, English is "another language".

There were some questions about good ages for studying languages. The starting ages are not nearly as important as the teachers and the students' attitudes.

If a student is just going to study a language, just like most students study most subjects – I think they needn't bother studying that language. They will not learn to speak the language. Neither will they learn the culture. I know of language teachers who do not know much of either. I am not really in agreement with the thought that – just studying has merit in itself.


I wouldn't deprive casual students of studying languages casually, but making language classes mandatory certainly takes away from the learning experience of serious students. Students will interfere with other students.

This also has to do with the question about languages with non-English characters: if you are serious about the language, the characters are not too hard. If you aren't strongly motivated to learn, then the characters could be another turn-off. (For some those characters can be a strong turn-on.)

I didn't understand the meaning of "special needs students".

Regarding "Studying another Language can be confusing for children, especially those with poor English skills" – if the other language is taught in English, then of course those with poor English skills are at a disadvantage.

However, if your are talking about native English speakers with poor English skills, they will be confused no matter what language the language is taught in.

 **22** I would be keen to see Languages education strengthened by introducing it into Stage 2 learning.

✍ 23 I believe all kindergarten students should be taught a language. Both of my children were taught a little of another language, plus sign language at preschool and they both loved it.

Sign language should be taught as it opens up a whole new world for both deaf and hearing people.


✍ 24 No language programme taught in our school.


✍ 25 Although in an ideal world I would like LOTE opportunities to be available in all schools, I think language programs in primary schools could be introduced more easily if there was a program designed to be taught by someone who was not necessarily trained as a teacher, but had experience in the language on offer or was a native speaker of the language


✍ 26 We have had Japanese students stay with us when our daughter was in Kinder. She embraced the language and found it very rewarding, I had studied Japanese at high school and thought it worthless at the time (1989) but have realised since it is great to have a 2nd language. Employment opportunities and times like when our local footy club had 45 Japanese students billeted out last year, we participated and out of all the local farming families, there were only 2 of us who spoke Japanese, we spent a lot of time interpreting for other families who in turn enjoyed sharing their farming practices and learning about the Japanese rice growing tactics (with the exception of one family who still have a post war grudge.)!!!! Our daughter is now more aware of the world around her.

✍ 27 I am concerned about the division of LOTE into two groups, Asian languages and others in NSW. Chinese Japanese Korean and Indonesian have background speaker streams in HSC and others don't, where students with French parents who grew up in France up to Year 10 can take HSC French along with those who studied French from scratch, but students with at least one Chinese parent who were born in Australian have to take background speaker HSC Chinese along side new-comers who just arrived from China.

I believe it is very unfair.

 **28** I think all school children at primary level should be given the opportunity to learn another language. The school as a whole should be teaching it from kindergarten to year 6. The language chosen should be with the consensus of the teaching faculty as well as parents.

 **29** My child has not had exposure to any Languages other than English.


 **30** I strongly support the early intervention with the teaching of languages. One of my children commenced French as an optional activity in K and Yr1 (ages 5 & 6). We since moved to a country school where this was not offered and as such she could not continue. At 10 she still remembers how to count and quite a few verbs. I'm sure if this was continued these skills would have been consolidated. Another child commenced Japanese in Yr 8. I insisted she continue these studies in Yrs 9&10. You wouldn't believe the increase in her self esteem when at her casual place of employment a tourist bus arrived to order and only she could communicate! As part of this course we hosted ex-change students from Tokyo. The experience was wonderful for all my daughters and I. My 10 yr old even involved her class by taking origami creatures in for news that she had made and teaching her class new words.

Languages as a chosen subject in senior years is not taken due to the fear of not scoring a high UAI.

Students with a tie to a second language choose that language because they know they can score well.


I have three children presently in every level of school - i.e. primary, secondary and University. I have experienced both the public system and private sectors. In my opinion Language presently does not have a high profile in the school curriculum.

(Contact details supplied)

 **31** It would help the junior students in high school if they were able to pick a language to study instead of being told to study a particular language. This could benefit them in later years if the school has a variety of languages on offer. They would then get a better grounding to the language they would prefer to study. The ability to study the culture of the language is also of strong benefit to the students.


While I believe that it would benefit students in Primary schools to learn a


language I do not believe that they have the resources or the teachers to enable a language to be taught.

 **32** To the best of my knowledge our school does not have language classes available as we are a primary school. We do however introduce other languages in the simplest form eg Greetings etc in other languages to the infants. I am not aware of what can be put in place to bring languages to the school.


I am concerned that our School does not have any musical curriculum apart from a dance group. We have not musical instruments no music classes and no music lessons offered. This is I believe a higher priority to obtain for our school before languages are taught.

Our school is built on traditional land and the school does involve the original custodians of that land in way of language, art and indigenous activities. We raise the Aboriginal flag with the Australian flag every morning and our sporting teams are named after native marsupials which have an Aboriginal belief. EG Platypus = Believe, Kangaroo = Dream etc


 **33** The delivery of language education in small rural centres like ours is difficult for the school and the teachers. Most teachers teach out of their area of expertise and as such languages are nearly always taught by untrained staff. If the school was to have a trained language teacher then they would only be teaching 6 lessons a fortnight in language and 38 in something else. In the last five years our students have had Italian, German, Japanese, German and currently Japanese.


 **34** This survey really made me aware of the little I know of the curriculum in general and I have no idea about other language studies. I don't even know if any of the teachers can speak/ teach another language. I know my niece at a private Anglican school has a French teacher and they study French avidly. I do know the earlier the better due to the pallet of the mouth changing making pronouncing words harder as we age but with 2 children with learning difficulty in kinder and years 2 will another language hinder them?


(Contact details supplied)

 **35** Teacher professional development and reduce class size to enable more interactive teaching


Primary language programs to be better supported. Continuity is not necessarily all important

 **36** The so-called "bilingual" French program at Killarney Heights Public School could be improved greatly by catering to all students and not just the 5% of French background speakers. The non-background speakers are given very little time allocation and the program is not differentiated at all to cater for the different levels of experience. Some of the teachers involved have been very enthusiastic but without great knowledge of the Australian education system. Communication with parents has been poor and at times non-existent. The content of the course seems to be ad hoc and bears little resemblance to the NSW K-10 syllabus. Homework has been heavily weighted towards grammar exercises (perhaps suitable for native speakers but certainly not Australian primary students) The program at the school is a public relations exercise which has generated some publicity but has not worked towards achieving significant outcomes for the majority of students. I am very positive about students learning languages but have been very disappointed with the French experience at KHPS.

 **37** The current model of language delivery in NSW public schools is inadequate and inconsistent. There are not enough qualified teachers to meet the needs of schools, particularly in rural areas, and there is no co-ordination of language teaching between schools at a local level, leading to inconsistency between primary and secondary schools. The 'forced' teaching of languages over a year in Stage 4 turns many children off learning a language as it reduces the ability of the school to meet the particular needs of its students.

 **38** My 9 yr old daughter & ALL students in the school are taught some basic Punjabi (including cultural immersion) as a large part of the Woolgoolga community consists of people with Punjabi origins & culture. This is a conscious effort by the school to encourage multiculturalism & help the Punjabi people integrate with the Australian way of life.

(Contact details supplied)

 **39** Languages in schools could be strengthened by starting to teach languages as compulsory subject EARLIER than is the case in NSW (usually Year 7). In my experience the kids are very receptive to Language learning from Kindy onwards, and this should be utilised, as it becomes "less cool" in High School, and has to compete with so many other specialised interests.

✍ 40 My daughter is unable to continue her Japanese study as our language teacher sadly passed away and we feel it would be too hard to go through open high to do a language

There has not been a suitable substitute found

✍ 41 My child learns Esperanto at school. I think that this is a very good choice because the class can learn the language to a useful degree in the hour a week allocated. This lets them use their language for intercultural learning in a wide variety of cultures, even though they have only two school years to learn in, at present. Esperanto is much easier to learn than most national languages and, for this reason, I believe that it would be practicable for properly resourced generalist teachers to include it in the normal semi-integrated curriculum of the junior and middle primary. My other children had a similar start in their language education and have gone on to do very well in other languages in high school.

(Contact details supplied)

✍ 42 Some questions were hard to answer as it depends on which language it is. Most national languages are too difficult to be studied in a limited amount of time, therefore it can be off-putting to have to learn all the difficulties, exceptions to rules, etc.

But there is a language that is an ideal first foreign language. It is Esperanto. Learning Esperanto boosts self-esteem as students can really see the progress they are making. With other languages the progress is too slow. It is always useful to learn a foreign language, but reaching fluency is not possible for most students who can't afford to travel overseas, etc.

I think many more Australian schools should choose to teach Esperanto. Esperanto can be taught extremely successfully in a limited number of hours. Students can then get to know lots of different cultures and not just one, as would be the case if they choose Japanese, for example. Furthermore it makes it much easier to study a second foreign language. It seems to me that all primary schools should teach Esperanto and then high schools can teach other languages. When you teach music you start usually with the recorder and then go on to a more difficult instrument. With languages it should be the same: start with Esperanto and then go on to another language.

If you browse the web you will see that many people find Esperanto extremely useful to make friends all over the world, to travel, to get to know different cultures, including Hungarian, Icelandic culture, cultures that are as

important as many others but are often ignored because those languages are so rarely taught.

✍ 43 Q7. Languages not offered. Q14. Unaware of school differences across the state. Q16. Why would discipline be any different?? Q17. No language, not given choice to answer 'No Languages classes'. Q21. Should be an elective in the higher years. Q22. No language teachers and apparently no funding within the school for a language teacher. Information sort from teacher. Q23. I am unaware of any such co-ordination. Q25. But this is an assumption because of the lack of importance placed

✍ 44 I'm not sure that Nambucca Heads falls into any of the categories at the beginning, ?coastal country town. Q7. NO LANGUAGES OFFERED. Q16. Why should discipline be any different? Q17. No languages, not given choice to answer in this way. Q21. Should language then be an elective?? Q22. No language teachers, apparently no funding. Q23. I am unaware of co-ordination between schools. My daughter is only in Kindy, so I am just starting of the journey of education and becoming aware of funding restraints. Q25. My answer is any assumption because of the perceived lack of importance placed on language skills. Q27. From speaking with staff - there is no funding available. However, in the past if a teacher has had a 2nd language they have been used but not in structured, continuous language classes. Q30. But this will greatly depend on field in which one enters. Q33. I really don't know, but surely it shouldn't be assumed that character based languages are harder and then not offered. I know several people who studied Japanese at school and have used it throughout their careers. Q48. No languages available. Q49. If that is true, YES Q50. I am unaware of this plan, however I will be seeking it out. Q53. There are a high number of aboriginal children at Frank Partridge, and apparently in the past some of the community members have come to the school and passed on some language skills.

I am aware of a public school in Canberra that is teaching French to the Kindy class, I am unaware if the whole school is important. Is this because of the school's geographic location????

I strongly believe that languages should be available to all school children.

✍ 45 Thanks for the invitation to participate.

For many of these issues I don't think there is a single right or wrong answer, especially about the role of learning foreign languages for children with special needs or learning difficulties. For each of these kids, decisions about


their education absolutely have to be made in an individualised basis.

I think all other kids should be strongly encouraged (and enabled!) to learn another language. Not because they will necessarily be sufficiently proficient in this language as an adult to use it for work, but for three other reasons:

- (1) to increase respect and appreciation of other languages, cultures and world views;
- (2) to understand by first hand experience how challenging and complex learning another language is and what the frustration of being unable to communicate even basic ideas can be like (to increase empathy and respect for immigrants), even though at the same time they learn the great satisfactions in mastering it; and
- (3) because it does wonders for their English, especially with the current English curriculum, which in my opinion is pretty abysmal and leaves the learning of basic grammar to what is done in other language classes.

I have learned three foreign languages (none of them from my own family) starting in Year 7, and they have been immeasurably enriching - personally, intellectually and culturally. I continue to dabble and play with languages, even though it in no way relates to my work.


NSW Students said

 **1** As a student studying French, I have noticed that language classes at my school are small yet the students in those classes are generally the really bright and intelligent kids because studying a language is quite demanding. It is my favourite subject and just recently our language class had a meeting with the principal--the outcome being that French would no longer run for our senior years and if we wanted to continue the subject then we would have to do so by distance education. There was a bit of an uproar. So our principal said that our French teacher could have us for a lesson in which used to be our sport time on Wednesdays and a few random lessons here and there with most of the work being done on our own.


In my cycle of school lessons I hardly have enough time to learn a proper understanding of the subject. It'd be great to have a couple more lessons of my language class each fortnight.

It would be AWESOME if there was a state or national wide language week, where students learning languages got to travel to see other students learning other languages at some kind of expo, because some schools are limited in what languages they can offer.

And if there is already some kind of language week and my class hasn't been informed, then it goes to show how little my school cares for its language department.


 **2** In my school, there are only about 20 people in the year 10 French class, and for the preliminary & HSC years only 9 students out of those 20 have chosen the course. they find it hard to do, or think that it's just a waste of time, but, as learning another language has also taught me the background of the country, it has also given me more confidence, and taught me some things about the English language, too!


I find languages interesting as well as a bit of a challenge. If I didn't learn another language I don't think I would be satisfied with my learning. Au revoir!


 **3** I think we should watch more fun movies and learn some cooking and crafting


 **4** Japanese is good


 **5** Well I don't really like FRENCH so it really doesn't matter to me


 6 We get fantastic opportunities at this school in our Language program, but I think that it would be better if there were more.

 7 I find learning a language is very fun and I find it interesting to learn about other cultures.


 8 Learning another language has improved my self-esteem and other people should be encouraged to learn another language as well.


 9 I strongly believe that languages are very important not only for learning about how languages work but for helping to broaden the perspectives of the students that learn them. Even though we are an English speaking country, a language which is widely spoken, I believe that it is still a wonderful experience to be able to speak and converse in another language.

 10 Languages should be studied from an early age and continued all through high school. They are a very useful tool when travelling, especially to European countries. Language teachers should speak to the language class in that particular language, as I am confident that this will rapidly improve understanding of the language and also provide an understanding of pronunciation. Languages are a very important life skill.


 11 I really enjoy doing German. The trip that we went on at the end of last year has really shaped the person that I am today. Experiencing different cultures is a life changing experience.


 12 Good work!! awsum survey.....


 13 I feel that studying a language has been a great benefit and has influenced my career choices for the future i.e. job prospects and further curricular studies.


 14 My school is quite relaxed and laid-back about our school language programs, not a lot of appreciation is expressed beyond the occasional overseas trips and student-exchanges. However, my French teacher is extremely passionate about this subject, beyond any of my other classes. This


encourages me to work harder and concentrate more on grammar rules, etc as my teacher has so much knowledge and experience to pass on.

 **15** I love learning a language because it will be beneficial later in life if I want to travel or work overseas. It is also very interesting learning about the cultural aspect of the language and country.


 **16** I would like to see government funding for overseas trips so that all students, not just those who are financially well off, can experience other cultures hands-on - particularly language schools.
I study HSC Japanese Continuers in a class of 13 in an independent girls Catholic school.
I feel that having foreign assistant teachers is very beneficial to the study of a language.
I would like to see language courses being introduced to all primary schools as the school that I attended did not cater for this.
More languages should be available at every school and more opportunities involving languages should be presented.

 **17** I believe that Saturday schools for community languages should be better funded, and more teachers found as if there are not enough people or teachers, the course will not run, therefore disadvantaging the remaining students.


 **18** I am completing the French Continuers course in year 12 this year and I extremely enjoy the subject. My French teacher is my favourite teacher and I believe he gets through more in his lessons than all my other subjects. Our lessons are always varied and highly productive. I believe French as a universal language will be of great use to me in later life and thoroughly enjoy the course. I feel a second language is very important.

 **19** I much prefer learning a language (German) than any other of my subjects I learn at school!
ICH BIN DER KLEINE SCHMETTERLING!


 **20** Japanese is a really great language to learn!

 **21** I think the students in school today need to realise there is a bigger world out there with many different cultures and languages. I travelled to Germany and was astounded to find out that they learnt not only German


and English but French, Latin and Italian. To only be able to speak a limited amount of German compared to them and only speak English I felt extremely ignorant and embarrassed that I knew so little about the world around me. If students were shown the opportunities that could be gained by learning languages eg working overseas etc I think learning a language would become so much more appealing. If they were also told what other students overseas learn and how it is vital in order to be able to travel and to be able to experience other cultures languages must be learnt.


 **22** Japanese is the best and my teacher has really good methods- I think she's probably the best Japanese teacher we've had so far. Japanese rules!

In many ways, I believe our school as a community and as a school in itself has presented the student body with a good range in regards to languages, and demonstrate an excellent manner of teaching fore mentioned languages. While this is all well and good, it would be nice to provide other languages as options as well. The limitation of 3 language choices is few, and there are a certain amount of students interested in doing other languages who have been turned in the directions of Saturday Schools for education in the language of choice. This is all well and good, seeing as I am one of the students who study a language at school and also externally, though I know many students who would be interested in another language. It would nice to have their opinions heard so as to benefit the other students coming through our school system.

 **23** I believe languages are a key to the education process. Without these magnificent subjects life would be like a rainy day with purple horizons. Hence forth I believe squirrels should be flying machines of utmost destruction

 **24** Teach Swedish

 **25** I love languages as I believe it will benefit later in life..... although it may take a lot of effort.

 **26** Most people simply aren't cut out to learn another language

 **27** I like French..... it is fun and I am a fun boy. We should have an excursion to France. That is all

✎ 28 Due to learning languages being compulsory I believe the curriculum is not as beneficial as it should be.

✎ 29 Languages are a good idea

✎ 30 Although I believe languages should be compulsory in lower years, we should have a wide choice of languages as well as teachers that are competent. French and Latin should not be favoured over other languages like Japanese and Spanish

✎ 31 Don't learn pointless languages like Latin in year 7, and don't make them compulsory. Ever!

✎ 32 Languages should be made to be more fun and not so much chore than other subjects are


✎ 33 Some language teachers, actually 1 out of about 3 Japanese teachers cannot control the discipline in the class, making the learning of others being very difficult. The only language teacher that I personally have come across is Ms (name of teacher) of (name of school) (Year 9 class).

✎ 34 I think that every thing raised in the survey was very appropriate and a very good way to find out what percentage of children learn languages and how they feel about them


✎ 35 I think this website is kind of boring and heaps off questions

✎ 36 I would like to say that everyone should learn a language as it has already excited me and I haven't even been studying French for a year. I like language classes because you can learn where English evolved from and how English got here which is great.

✎ 37 I think that our school languages program should involve parents more.

 38 I hate language and it is a waste of time and air.

 39 I think that French could be fun BUT my TEACHER makes it BORING *yawn*


 40 I feel that learning a language is very important in my everyday life. It could help me later in my older life. lol =)

 41 Language at school is alright but I think that I haven't learnt all that I should this year about the language


 42 Languages are cool .. I like languages because they are cool


 43 French is alright but it's a BIT !! of a bore. No offence to my teacher.


 44 LANGUAGE IS COOL N NOT COOL

 45 I do not think language is important and its boring and I don't understand the work and the teacher. She is standing at the front every lesson talking gibberish

 46 I don't think language is important because why are we going to benefit it, like why do it if you don't like it

 47 The schools should have more outside activities to learn about the languages except for being in a classroom all the time

 48 Language is not important and we should concentrate on the more important subjects and the teacher and the subject is so hard to understand

 49 Language is a hard subject and I don't understand it properly I don't think it is a very good subject from my point of view.

✍ 50 I think most schools should teach students Spanish.

✍ 51 Thanks 4 the survey very good.

✍ 52 I think languages shouldn't be taught because it is to confusing and is a waste of time and space in our heads when we could be putting more time into sport because of the obesity levels getting higher in Australia.

✍ 53 I think that learning French is not that important to me, we only learn it for 1 year so there is no point. What is the point of having only French or maybe Italian to learn in school, why cant we learn another language like Greek. Plus why do we have to learn a language which we might not even want to learn in the first place.


✍ 54 I reckon teachers should find a better way to teach the class in a fun way. And I think we should teach Spanish rather than French. Or just teach the non-speaking English countries to learn English or just stay in their countries. thanks for listening by (name)


✍ 55 I think that the language taught in my school is unsatisfying and we should have more out of school activities to restaurants such as an Italian one because we are learning Italian anyway we should go out of school more to learn how it is like and to see for ourselves how the culture is produced....we think personally that our teachers should let us experience the taste of other cultures food - but not the cheese


✍ 56 Our teachers are very mean and make us cry when they give us cheese and students should have a right to choose decline if they want to eat cheese especially FRENCH BLUE CHEESE!!!!!! And we should have a restaurant at our school for free thank you


✍ 57 We have learned a lot and I think that it is going to help us one day in our lives

✍ 58 I FEEL DISAPOINTED AT THIS SURVEY AND HOW BORING IT HAS BEEN!!!!!!!!!!


 59 I think this survey was a good idea because it gives the students a chance to express what they think about the languages taught in their school.

 60 I like language because it teaches you about other languages which is good in your life

 61 Languages are good to learn because when you learn the a language you learn about the their culture. It is also good because when you go to that country you can speak their language.

 62 I don't like language I don't want to do language. I don't like language because I don't learn a lot


 63 I try really hard, but its a bit hard when we have people mucking around in our class.

 64 I think that is a waste of time to learn a different language
And we are not gonna use it in our lives only at school and it is stupid
And I try and it does not work so I don't care and the language that I am learning is a waste

 65 Our Principal only supports the language she knows. My class takes Japanese but she only supports French! And French gets all the good stuff because (name of principal) only likes French...and we are left out :(

 66 STOP LANGUAGES

 67 Languages are interesting but do get confusing and boring

 68 I think that if schools strengthened languages more parents would be interested in putting their children into the school

✍ 69 I think that learning a language can be fun but I wouldn't want to have any more language lessons than there already are in the week A and B periods because we learn enough language as it is.

✍ 70 I think teachers should explain what words mean before they go on to teaching you sentences with words you do not understand in them.

✍ 71 My personal opinion about learning a language other than English is that there should be a few languages available so that the students can choose which one they feel most comfortable with and that the language they have chosen benefits them in their life. Teachers should make it easier or more simple for children to learn a language especially one that they are not familiar with.

✍ 72 Language is not my cup of tea. It is interesting at times but also boring at times. My teacher makes it fun sometimes if she's in a good mood. Language confuses me at times because I'm not familiar with it because I don't like it.

✍ 73 Language is the best subject in the world...I love it with all my heart=]

✍ 74 I sometimes enjoy learning French but my French teacher has been relieving deputy for three quarters of the year and we haven't really had our learnt anything thing this year because of that. Our teacher puts us down. I am already learning a different language outside of school.

✍ 75 Learning a language is important for students in primary school or in high school. It is really helpful for students who know how to speak more than one language and I think that it can change people's life.

✍ 76 Hiii (names of 2 students) feel that language takes an important part in the future...we believe that its great to learn heeeeeeeeps n heeeeeeeeeeeeps of different cultures and languages for it is deeply important to us..! We had a gr8 time doin dis survey and yehhh!!!!
C u soon x0x00x cya mwa mwa!! =]

✍ 77 Learning French is boring. We should learn a language that is voted by all of our students.

✍ 78 Languages can be difficult in some stages. When I hear the one language over and over I get the hang of it some language is as simple as maths. Language can be very boring. In a way I would much rather learn another language like Greek or Modern Greek as a simpler language to learn

✍ 80 Bonjour people reading this...
I think French is boring,
I don't get it even though I try very hard to listen..
It's not the students around me either that are distracting me.

My backgrounds are Arabic and New Zealand and I do want to learn Arabic but not French.

French is wayyyyyyyyyy to hard and I don't like it..
ok well dats my story..
and love from (student name).
-x0x0x-

✍ 81 I think that learning a language is important but we should get the choice on what language we learn because personally if I had a choice I wouldn't choose French I would choose Maori or Indonesian. I think that we should have more lessons practicing how to speak the French and not do as much worksheets, and when our teacher is away we NEVER get a teacher that speaks the French.
This is my opinion but I don't really care about this survey thingy or whatever it is . . . so like yeah!!!
Take care


✍ 82 I would like to learn a other languages but the (language) teachers treat the kids like they are nothing. They have no respect like other teachers do. I want to learn Chinese, Irish, Scottish, Italian and more fun stuff.

✍ 83 I think that language should have more variety and learning time as there are not many classes of language but some languages are too difficult 2 understand and learn for some kids.

I think French is not such an important subject but it is nice to know that we can learn it if we wish.

My background is Chinese but I can not speak, read, write and I can barely understand it. I do not really want to learn it but it might help me later on. Having different languages here to learn could be nice.

NSW Language Teachers said

 **1** I am currently the head teacher of Languages in my school and I'm in charge of the only Languages Faculty for most part of my region, which is quite extensive. I have been committed to the teaching of languages for the past 25 years. I have worked in various Government schools in NSW all of my teaching career. As an enthusiastic first year out Teacher of French (my native language, Italian and German) I have had the unfortunate experience of discovering that teachers who taught languages were treated almost as a second class citizen both by the teaching personnel (i.e. my colleagues in other faculty areas) as well as the school principals and most members of the community. It has been a constant struggle to fight for the "survival", recognition and acceptance of my subject area. This, in fact I discovered was a common attitude by most of my colleagues in languages. We often got together at in-services, workshops and Training days to bemoan our situation and discuss ways to make our subject area appear more meaningful within our school community. This was an unheard of experience amongst my non language teaching colleagues who never had to worry about the survival of their subject area let alone their job every year. I have had to make many sacrifices as most language teachers do simply to be allowed to teach a senior language class. In the past I've had to teach different levels of the same course in the one class as well as two different languages in the one composite class. In order to form elective classes in years 9 and 10 I have even taught up to three languages in the one class. It was a nightmare! The principals and the curriculum committees never understood the commitment and the amount of hard work that all of us languages teachers put into our work, in order to justify our existence. I've been involved in many excursion trips overseas as a means to give the study of languages meaningful relevance to the students and the school community. Unfortunately, after 25 years of justification, hard work and everyday battles in executive meetings I find that not much has changed in the general attitude of my non language teaching colleagues and parents of students. Every language teacher that I have known or met is strongly committed to all aspects of language teaching and we persevere despite the reduction of our face to face time and yet year in and out our senior HSC students' results in Languages continue to rank amongst the highest results in the HSC exams. I'm also very concerned and sad to see that my younger colleagues who came to my school with the same love and enthusiasm for teaching their subject area are now experiencing the similar prejudices and problems concerning the validity of teaching Languages and they are becoming jaded and disappointed with the general lack of support for Languages both at the school administrative level and by the Department of Education.

✍ 2 I would like to involve the community more in overall language learning. I am in the process of applying for grants which will enable me to run courses that include one significant other learning the language with the student. I have had so many parents say that they wish they'd kept up their high school French or that despite the fact that they are native speakers, their children aren't able to respond in the relevant languages.

I believe that a goal such as a trip that the parent and child could go on together would give the two groups a common bond as well as encouraging the parties to practice.

We need to look at ways to allow students to use their language here in Australia and since we're in a country area, I need to use the resources I have here which can be family members with backgrounds in the language or even family members with previous knowledge of the subject.

Because we live on an island that is so far from the rest of the world, language learning is imperative to take the student's minds off the island even if it's only for a little time.

✍ 3 One of the aims of the National Plan for Languages is to make Language learning a relevant part of the curriculum and yet many aspects of the HSC exam (NSW) are not relevant to a young person's life (for instance, the monologue at Extension Level, or the analytical questions in Reading and Listening tasks). It is not right that the final outcome of a Language Learning path should be based on analytical, literary skills. These outcomes put off many students who would otherwise be attracted by a course that offers them a skill for life.

The need for continuity that is addressed in the Plan must also be applied to the policies that the Plan is trying to implement. At the moment the discrepancies between the outcomes of the NSW curricula and the National Plan will lead to failure.

What will happen after 2008?

✍ 4 I believe that learning a language is of great importance in a multicultural society such as Australia. Learning a language opens people up to other cultures and is therefore important in developing understanding between cultures. Moreover, globalisation means that knowledge of another language is an important skill for everyone to acquire. Australians have traditionally viewed language learning as a subject for more able students but all students can benefit from learning another language.
(Contact details supplied)

✍ 5 Thank you to those who have put together this survey for the purpose of allowing teachers of languages to put forth their views on the state of languages in schools within Australia today. I feel strongly about the lack of support and networking and professional development frequently available for teachers of languages and strongly feel that a return to 2 years compulsory language is vital to strengthening the amount of students going through to HSC languages.

✍ 6 The average student in my area does not feel much of a connection with other nations, cultures and languages. As language educators, we need to enthuse them and give them positive experiences so that they are more likely to take "intercultural" opportunities in the future.

✍ 7 Don't have time to complete this section. Happy to be contacted, however. Have strong views on many of the issues raised and know how to encourage students to study a language after 35 years experience and success. Regards (Name supplied)

✍ 8 One of the areas which has been disregarded in Language teaching is the teachers' welfare, especially in those school where there in no Language Head teacher. The workload is enormous with many administrative tasks placed on the language classroom teacher. Another problem is the constant uncertainty of not knowing when the language focus of a particular school will change and how the teacher is going to cope with that change - to find time to retrain in another language on top of a normal load and administration tasks. In the past, I have met teachers who were forced to take further studies to accommodate the new language focus of a school without much support from the Education Department.

The professional development program and incentives to continue professional learning are limited as well. For many years I have been interested in doing a Master in Linguistics, but I cannot find time to do it. There is no sufficient study release time. Even if it were given, who is going to replace a language teacher within a specific language with such a shortage of language teachers at this stage? We just seem to be locked in.

✍ 9 I believe that LOTE teachers are teaching not only LOTE but also tolerance and understanding in Languages classrooms. I hope that these students someday will make a valuable contribution to a more tolerant society and peaceful world.

✍ 10 I am concerned that some principals in NSW do not value or support languages and will try to find ways of not allowing senior classes to run, thus ultimately reducing staff numbers and depriving the faculty of head teachers. I have worked previously at a selective school where this became the case, and am now casual at another school where the same process of eroding the languages faculty of classes and students is taking place. I am very surprised (and pleased) that this initiative of supporting languages is taking place, as I was beginning to think that principals had been give a "higher directive" to "kill off" European languages.

I would suggest that Languages can be strengthened by ensuring that such principals have no say in not allowing senior classes to go ahead, provided the class reaches a minimum number of students. When I went to school, my senior language classes were permitted to go ahead with 5 or 6 students, now it seems that not even 8 is enough(at my current school).

Another suggestion might be to form "lines" after subject selections (which some schools already do)

What about bonus UAI points for students of languages who present more than one language for the HSC?

Money talks - what if schools are offered more funding if they maintain a full language program in all years?


How about offering funding for computer hardware for languages classes as often computing studies classes are on the same lines and hard to access?


(Contact details supplied)


✍ 11 I would in theory accept that learning another language in the junior years, at least 7 & 8, should be compulsory with the possibility of elective study afterwards but class sizes can make it difficult to maintain the focus on the development of aural and oral skills. It is a practical subject, given the intense interaction needed between teacher and student, and within groups. Class sizes limited to 20-24 would make it possible to maintain motivation and achieve outcomes at a higher level.


It is almost impossible to compete in the junior school at elective subject selection time with subjects students perceive as more practical and with less bookwork, such as Human Movement, Timber, Music and Food Technology. We haven't had classes in 9 & 10 now for some years. We find that students are wanting to return to languages in Year 11. Our Beginner classes are well regarded in the school and we achieve high results. On initial selection this year, 34 students indicated an interest in French and we are starting with a class of 25 with some turned away.

Isolation is an important issue for language teachers. Often they are the only one in their school or the only one teaching a particular language or course.

 **12** As an Indonesian teacher I have been finding it difficult in recent years to get classes as a result of Indo-Aust relations in light of Australians in jail in Bali on drug charges, and also because of the Bali Bombings. The "war on terror" has had a negative impact on the students perception of Indonesia.

 **13** As a teacher of an Asian Language at a Selective School where most of the students are from a non-English speaking Asian background there seems to be more positive acceptance of Language learning here. Even though it is a boys school there is not a perception here that learning a Language is for girls (who do seem to have better language and communication skills on the whole) or for the lesser able students (as might occur in some Comprehensive schools). Also our boys enjoy learning languages (as is evidenced by our numbers of students who choose languages) and achieve excellent results in the HSC.

 **14** I find my students are both stimulated and challenged when the break down the initial resistance to learning a language. I live in a country town where there isn't much interaction with people from other cultures. Therefore the students (and parents) think there is no relevance to learning a language. I feel that I am opening up the world for them. Even if they don't continue studying Japanese, They have an awareness of another culture which will have an impact on their total well-being.
Please expand the language program in schools. \

 **15** I have a substantial interest in the issues of engagement and motivation for Language learners, particularly boys and students with special learning needs. In this context, I am currently working with the NSW DET to develop and trial a website which is both a teaching and learning resource and a professional development tool.


It's Language learning for the 21st century, focusing not only on what Languages teachers and students do, but how they do it.

It is ICT based, with a hands-on, vocational learning focus for the real world of work. The prototype (in French) provides a flexible framework for development in a range of languages. A Japanese version is in the planning stages. Languages teachers are using the Action Research model to introduce 'Le Francais au Travail - Creation d'un site Web' with significant success. As with any students, boys and students with special needs not only can, they will and they do learn languages very successfully, when the approach meets their needs and interests.


Issues highlighted in Feedback from students, teachers and parents include the value of language learning in the development/reinforcement of literacy skills, and the associated building of confidence/self-esteem. This is strongly linked to the personalised learning approach taken. Parents and students develop a far better understanding of the long-term value of Language learning in terms of employment-related skills. The DET has published a Case Study on the project. The URL is

<https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/vetinschools/schooltowork/research/casestudies.html>

It's one positive, pro-active approach to a very important educational issue that also takes a bigger picture, longer term view to the value of Language learning.


 **16** I have been involved in the initial Asian languages 1992 training of non-native speakers to teach the 200hour primary Korean language course. This model of teacher training lacked fundamental foresight. I am now involved in a model of training that will overcome some of these factors.

I would be happy to discuss my experiences in the development of Korean K-6 in NSW Public Schools.
(Contact details supplied)

 **17** Having sole control over the language dept. in my school (French) I feel supported by the principal and my local network of Language schools within the Diocese of Lismore. We exchange ideas and techniques as well as support with programmes. We feel a little isolated, away from major centres and access to museums, performances in theatre, cinema and restaurants and other cultural activities . However, it means that students do warmly accept any information presented to them and they look forward to learning about life outside of their regional area. It gives them the confidence to inquire, explore and perceive the wide world... with some language skills. A pilot programme in our local primary feeder school with a native French speaker helping young learners is also reaping success and interest as our numbers have shown a strengthening and we have more numbers electing to continue in electives of Years 9 and 10.
(Contact details supplied)


 **18** I believe that languages in schools can be strengthened by implementing and promoting a national languages week much like science

week. This could showcase the importance of languages and language learning.

 **19** Parental influence and enthusiasm towards the teaching of languages goes a long way towards the strength of the subject and the enthusiasm of the students. Students often reflect the prejudices of their parents and take quite a period of time to not feel threatened by learning information about another culture.

I often find that students with learning difficulties and low ability students achieve in Korean to the same standard as other students and obtain a great deal of self confidence as they are back to the same level as other students for the first time since infants school - the level playing field again and this seems to spur them on.


(Contact details supplied)

 **20** I feel that the government doesn't value languages education. This was shown when funding through the Languages Continuity Initiative was cancelled. Also, languages aren't seen to be important as it is not compulsory in Primary Schools.

The Languages consultants at the Department of education at Ryde are fantastic. They give great support.


The new Syllabus has put languages in Primary schools into the HSIE syllabus. Before it had its own syllabus.

Languages in primary schools are rare and there should be more funding. COGS for languages is great as it helps to make Languages part of the school learning environment in a more connected way.

 **21** Australian students, particularly in the country areas where there are few foreign students, have little concept of the need to learn languages. They cannot see the need to learn languages as they will have little use for them. This attitude is reflected in the attitude of the parents - they place little value on learning a language and often tell their children that it does not matter if they make little effort as they will soon be dropping the subject.

We have a yearly visit from a foreign school and this has raised the profile of languages a little as the students have discovered that they need a language in order to communicate.

Continual problem with lack of resources and lack of access to interactive material or technology.


 **22** I think that learning a language other than English is very important for students. I have been teaching Japanese and French for 10 years and find

that students and parents are very supportive of both languages and believe that it is helpful for their future.

I think it is also very important, especially these days that students learn to accept other cultures and learning another language helps with this.

Also learning another language means learning grammar and that helps with English as well.

I believe my stories about travelling and meeting exchange students etc is very good for my students and most students love my classes. Discipline is not a problem and languages classes are generally supported by the executive of the school although it is often difficult to run senior classes with small numbers. But the Open High School is a good option when classes cannot be run and works successfully at our school.

 **23** I have taken an active role in promoting quality languages learning throughout my career. I am dismayed to find that we are getting fewer young teachers into the service and the older ones are not keen to maintain the high standards required to keep up with quality teaching practices. It is a lot of hard work! Expectations to attend in-services and workshops are an extra burden, whether they are in or outside of school hours.

The enthusiasm we have to engender into each and every one of our lessons to counteract the negative impressions of languages courses is very tiring. Languages teachers rarely have the luxury of parallel classes, which means preparation and delivery of lessons do not have 'short-cuts' as in other subjects.

There are usually only one or two languages teachers on a staff, so support networks have to be established outside the school, again taking up personal time (or time which needs to be spent on lesson preparation)

I have a position within the Northern Beaches Secondary College, where I have the time and "brief" to support my colleagues at 5 campuses. This is a luxury not afforded to many other schools. I am keeping my colleagues up to date with syllabus changes, quality teaching and learning practices and provide opportunities to network and conduct professional dialogue and sharing of concerns.

I wish I had some answers for the many issues that languages teaching (and learning) highlights, but I do not.

I believe we are 'behind the times' in relation to Europe and Asia with regard to languages acquisition, but I cannot see a government change to combat this. It will take years to overcome the perceptions that Australians will get by with only knowing English.

I am prepared to be contacted to expand on my comments, if you like.
(Contact details supplied)

✍ 24 Languages can be strengthened by more people seeing them as of value. Whether for improving English skills, future work prospects, cultural learning etc, students need to be taught that they are of value. Parents and other staff often say languages are too hard despite the fact they don't speak another language...how would they know then?

Languages teachers DO have skills. We are able to communicate in another language. Some people can paint, some do experiments, and some are great at maths. Teachers ALL have special skills but as a language teacher in a small faculty, we are not at all valued or considered.

✍ 25 It is extremely unfortunate that Australia's greatest resource for developing students' language potential is often not recognised. I refer to our bilingual population whose language and skills are often devalued in the current political climate. We need to use the skills of these people who "live their languages" in the delivery of languages education. One way of doing this would be to provide more recognition and funding for community language schools so that community language teachers could be adequately compensated for the contribution they make to Australian society. This would, of course require more accountability but I believe that this would be welcomed if it meant recognition for their work.

Training of language teachers in Australia is currently inadequate. There is not always "in country" experience included in their training nor sufficient resources made available for them to practice and update their language. Insufficiently trained teachers are often employed as a matter of convenience or to suit the timetable which leads to delivery of less than satisfactory programs.

The range of languages that are offered in mainstream schools and the way in which they are taught needs serious review.

I look forward to the opportunity to complete the indigenous and community language surveys.

✍ 26 I am a native German language teacher, teaching German, French and Spanish having lived and worked in the respective countries for many years. I teach on a casual basis at various private high schools in Sydney, as well as at TAFE and community colleges to adults. I am always amazed, how few native speaking language teachers there are in schools and the often poor quality of vocabulary, pronunciation and cultural awareness of the non native language teachers.

(Contact details supplied)

✍ 27 The movement of the entire curriculum to a market-driven one is probably the greatest influence on languages. A content-based course can't be dumbed down, as many other secondary courses have been. Spoon feeding doesn't work. Our school begins language study in Year 8, far too late I believe. There is little support or understanding about the value of language study from the executive, and less from parents. They feel forced into it by the mandatory nature of the 100 hours in NSW. If their child prefers basket-weaving or jewellery-making, then that's ok. Elective choices appear to be based on rather transient thinking.

✍ 28 Firstly the Government and Board of Studies need to take language learning seriously. Increase the mandatory indicative hours to a minimum of 200 hours. The 100 hours has killed language teaching in NSW.

The Continuers HSC course should have eligibility criteria such as:
Completed SC in language or equivalent standard. All other students should be allowed to do Beginners course.

There should be incentives such as subsidies for students to travel overseas on exchange. This should be for a minimum of 6 weeks to overcome the problem of junkets. Senior students should be allowed to travel without a teacher as this requirement has inhibited the running of exchange programs in many schools.

I would like to see a new HSC Course called Business Language to make the learning more relevant to students focussed on a career.

✍ 29 Language learning is too often considered an esoteric and/or impractical study and not "useful". The Media should be used more systematically and aggressively to educate the public about the benefits of language learning. In Australia, people generally assume that English, Maths and Science are essential studies, that History and Geography are important but far fewer people would give language learning the same importance. Therefore informative reports about the advantages to cognitive development, to career choices and enhanced career paths, inter-racial understanding and tolerance, cultural awareness, cultural ties and appreciation of the rich contribution of non-English cultures (not to mention travel allowing the traveller to meet the real people rather than the hotel employees in 4-star hotels) should be topics of such reporting.

✍ 30 I believe that all children should have the opportunity to learn Latin as it is the root of so many other languages.

✍ 31 As there is perhaps a lack of specialist teachers in certain languages some schools consider employing people with a languages background but not necessarily specialists in their field. Therefore the students' needs and interests are not necessarily being met nor catered for. I believe parents should be given an option and should be kept informed as to staffing in specialist areas. I know that if there were a choice, I would prefer my child being taught by a qualified, experienced/ native speaker as opposed to a teacher with minimal teaching experience and who has to take a refresher course in order to prepare to teach. Perhaps this can satisfactorily be done at a junior level, but when it comes to teaching seniors, even at beginner level, that's quite another story.

✍ 32 I would like to add that I have been teaching for 26 years, and have been sustained and aided by the co operative nature of my colleagues. Language teachers where I have taught have worked together mostly very well to try to buoy up the relevance of Languages, stimulate the students and organise special events as well as share ideas, share resources and hand over to each other anything they have found that might help with teaching. As most have been small departments, often without a Languages qualified Head teacher, this has sometimes been a difficult situation, trying to explain why we have so many tests - reading, writing, listening, speaking, grammar, vocab etc. - and to explain to the students why we have so many Assessment Tasks compared to other subjects. With formal exams, listening and speaking are not often timetabled, but, "Surely you can do them in class time", is a common response, losing even more face to face time in senior classes.

ICT has been a boon to my teaching of Languages, as there are so many authentic resources on the net - if there is not a security block on the site from the school portal. It has saved me a lot of money on magazines from Europe in a search for material, although the time I spend every week looking for such material often adds up to more than 15 hours per week.

I hope my ramblings have been useful, as I have fears for the continuation of European Languages in Australian schools.

✍ 33 I would love to see an exchange program sponsored by the federal government that makes it easy for students to travel to an overseas country once they complete their HSC. It would be good for the country as a whole to have citizens who have been exposed to other cultures.

✍ 34 Living in a small country town I often become very frustrated at the level of intolerance towards other cultures from both parents and students. I

often have students who would like to continue with the study of languages but don't really see any need for it, or their parents won't let them because it is a 'waste of time'.

 35 I believe each high school needs to focus on teaching one language each.


Where there are 2 language teachers working together to promote and teach the same language there is better continuity, support and a much improved programme due to the finances going to one language.


In schools trying to promote 2 or more languages there is constant conflict, never enough money for resources and staff working in isolation.

Universities must realise the need for students to be very fluent (capable of achieving 100% in the HSC) in the language they choose to teach. Many of the student teachers who have come to me are simply not fluent enough to excite the students or be creative in the classroom.

Making language learning compulsory is not the key to success. Making it attractive, challenging and giving the students a chance to use their skills in a practical sense is what is needed.

(Contact details supplied)

 36 There were some good language programs placed at the primary schools in 70's. However when the funds were taken away, the programs stopped and naturally the offer at the high school level dropped. There is a strong need for language programs at the primary level to ensure good standard language program at the secondary level. Generally speaking, Asian languages are pushed away in the North Coast and not taught well enough to keep the standards.


 37 I wish, with all my heart that we could convince parents and students that learning a language and therefore, about another culture is worthwhile. Many Anglo-Saxon students believe that "everyone should speak English" and that "our way is the right way - their way is stupid". It is incredibly disheartening to fight for every class, every lesson and for survival when broadening children's minds should be the most important thing there is in the curriculum.


I believe that there needs to be a PR/awareness campaign, building the profile of languages and reinforcing the importance of languages, particularly on TV. Having well-known people talk about how essential it is to learn about other cultures (and not to assume that your own is the best) would make an immense difference. When the Leggo ads came on TV and kids saw famous

people speaking in Italian, they were really eager to give it a try. In the same way, we need to have high-profile people talking up languages on a REGULAR basis where students and parents will see it.

Of course, the other thing you need is money to fund small languages' classes. If, through lack of numbers, elective classes don't happen (and this is very often the case), students in other years don't choose languages because they don't think it has a future. (Contact details supplied)


 **38** It would help if Principals understood that classes of 8 or 10 in the senior years should be allowed to go ahead as Languages is a specialist area.


 **39** I have been teaching for a very long time, but a lot of it has been as a casual - hence probably my cynicism. I feel that many Australian families still do not perceive language learning as important or relevant (though sometimes this is used as justification for sheer laziness). Schools where language study is confined to a small number of lessons per week also perpetuate this idea. Regretfully, I do not think it is useful for ALL students regardless of ability to follow a similar programme, especially when they already have problems with English literacy; I do feel strongly that all students can benefit from what one might call "multicultural studies" investigating different lifestyles and customs, with a modicum of language work incorporated in this, in the hope of fostering tolerance and understanding, and in stimulating interest in cultures other than our own.


 **40** As a language teacher I feel it is too broad a gap between 'somewhat satisfied' and 'very satisfied' with my job. One area of great concern is the continuing devolution of support at consultant level within the NSW DET. Indonesian, in particular is a language which has suffered diminishing student numbers in recent years and instead of looking at ways in which these numbers may be increased, the NSW DET has removed influential and highly effective and supportive personnel from its consultative ranks. Regional languages teachers often feel the lack of support more than their metropolitan based peers and the onus is very much upon individual interest groups to support each other, with often the responsibility resting upon a few people; the pool of support is only so deep in regional areas.


I love my job as a language teacher, the rewards can be so great and it is disappointing that the initial plan for so much support and funding from governments at both state and federal levels, is becoming depleted and the general perception is less important. I teach distance education to a variety of students with differing needs (isolation, medical, behavioural etc) and am dismayed that funding has been removed to cut to prepare relevant, up to

date materials for these students which can be used by all Distance Education facilities. There is simply insufficient time available for teachers to prepare materials. We do not have, particularly in regional areas, access to native language speakers, technical equipment to prepare professional materials nor the physical time to create the bulk and level of materials required.


 **41** Thank you for the opportunity to express my views. I suppose the different communities represented in this survey will have many different views depending to a degree on the cultural background of the clients. I have seen how important and relevant acquiring a language can be in the short term but more importantly in the long term. My own daughter can serve as an example here, although I never taught her she was taken to Italy for three weeks with the support of government funding. I can only describe her as a very self contained and retiring sort of person but her trip to Italy saw her blossom. Her language skills were improved and her interest in the broader picture grew immeasurably. My son is now applying for Spanish after 2 years travelling in South America since completing his HSC. Sorry the bell tolls.....


 **42** The importance of Language learning in the eyes of students seems to have slipped over the years. I believe that many students are put off doing Languages in the HSC because the exams are so difficult - particularly the Listening component. When I compare the exams of other subjects to Languages I see a great level of imbalance. In other subjects, as long as you know your dates/facts you can answer the questions, but in Languages, if you don't grasp the vocab or the content of the listening/reading components then you are lost. Who are the people setting the exams? There may be too much input by University lecturers who have an unrealistic view of high school students' capabilities. Set a more reasonable exam and you may have more students willing to choose Languages in the senior years.


 **43** I think it is fantastic to learn another language - In Australia we are terribly disadvantaged because we are so isolated from other cultures. We think it's good if someone can speak a second language and amazing if they can speak a third language. Yet for so many people, in most other parts of the world, it's not unusual to speak 5 languages. SBS is making strides in breaking down our stereotypes. We all chip away to make a difference in our small corner... it is one of the problems of rural Australia (monolingualism/ monoculturism).

 **44** I would value more support from parent bodies for the study of Languages in general. Parents of our students have studied Languages in their own schooling and did not always have positive experiences which are

then relayed to their children. This is not helpful as it can taint the attitude of students to their own language learning experiences. Although English is nowadays such a global language, students can learn so much more in meaningful language classes other than acquiring skills in another language. Learning Languages is a long term proposition and should be seen as the start of life-long learning.

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 46 I believe that it is important to recognise that all students can benefit from the opportunity to learn a language other than English. Not only will it help them to better understand English, it will also develop brain paths that will otherwise atrophy. However, I also believe that it is even more important to recognise that to become a competent user of a second language any student must be willing to undertake a serious academic study of the language, and not simply be seduced by cultural experiences and "language games" into thinking of language as an escape from the rigours of the acknowledge academic fields such as Maths, Physics, Chemistry. It is also important that language study be recognised as a practical field of study, and that class sizes be appropriately small, and support from native speakers be adequate to allow students to genuinely develop their skills. At the moment real success in language learning is often not available to the genuine second language learner, but is the province of the privileged sub-set of students who have additional input as a result of family circumstances. At senior secondary level it is important to differentiate meaningfully between those students who started school with no knowledge of a second language, and those who already had a significant grounding in a second language at home.


 47 The fundamental problem facing Language study in Australian schools is a generally poor community attitude to towards Language study. This poor attitude is, therefore, reflected at all policy-making levels - government, bureaucracy, senior school administrators and organisations such as the Department of Education, Association of Independent Schools and Catholic Education Office. The latter organisation has a particularly poor attitude and record in this matter. Moreover, this negative attitude flows down to the


majority of teachers in individual schools, as well as to instructors in teacher education institutions. Statistically, therefore, many parents find that the attitude of all these organisations reinforces their own prejudiced attitudes.

The problem is compounded by the fact that Language study is academic, arduous, time-consuming and, in Schools awash with many hours consumed with compulsory curriculum core subjects and a few soft options to fill in the rest of the school day, a less desirable option for students seeking the easy path. Moreover, they will, again and again, be dissuaded from Language study at every possible turn by parents, teachers and administrators. Therefore, Languages classes are often small and receive fewer hours than they deserve. This, in turn, means that the universal message is that Language study is an insignificant component of the wider curriculum.


A further problem is raised by the fact that many people completely misunderstand the point of Language study and tend to refer to very superficial, so-called relevant factors such as tourism, business or immigration. These aspects of language study also pit one Language against another as each scrambles to be perceived as the most relevant in a desperate struggle to attract enough students to form a viable class. It is to the credit of the Federal Government policy document that it has removed the concept of priority Languages and regards each as equally valuable.


These days, it is a brave school administration which requires its students to undertake more Language study than is required by statute. Schools are increasingly obsessed with results in public assessment of various core elements of the curriculum; since Language study never forms part of this, it is, yet again, seen to be insignificant or irrelevant. Many schools fail to appreciate that, if they strengthened their curriculum offering by requiring students to study more than one language over some years, they would actually, in most instances, be the only school in a very wide area to do so and could therefore make this a strong selling point for the school. Instead, they cringe and follow the mob, obsessed with aping, simulating or competing with exactly what the school down the road is doing. There is an alarming sameness about so many schools in educational areas as they compete with each other over trivialities. In the independent sector it was first science laboratories, then swimming-pools and gymnasia, then design and technology centres, then performing arts and drama centres, then updated technology centres ... there is an alarming lack of imagination among educators as they continually spiral inwards to outrank their rivals instead of seeking to think outside the square, reshape their curricula and seek to offer genuinely different curriculum structures. Occasionally, a high-minded principal is capable of doing this; when he/she bites the bullet, it is remarkably surprising to see how often a Language Programme is hugely strengthened.


 48 As the sole surviving Head Teacher of LOTE in a NSW non-selective government boys' high school. I am appalled by the indifference of the Department to the heavy gender bias in LOTE. Overwhelmingly, boys are being marginalised. There is no effort to look at the different learning styles of boys when it comes to writing curricula and programs. But it is not surprising considering that of the 24 senior curriculum officers at Ryde in the LOTE unit of the Curriculum Directorate only 1 is a male, and he's there to look after the computers! Only 8% of male candidates at the NSW HSC are studying a LOTE and their performance is way below that of girls. More boys sat for the Leaving Certificate exam in French in 1935 than sat for all languages in 2000. The male teacher of LOTE is an endangered species but nothing is being done to remedy this. This year's HSC showed a drop in LOTE candidates and about 75% of LOTE students are in non-government and selective high schools. The study of languages in NSW suffers from having a curriculum directorate staffed by people who really have no idea of what is going on. There hasn't been a meeting of LOTE Head Teachers called in more than 10 years and the Directorate doesn't even know who those Head Teachers are! The study of LOTE in comprehensive government high schools is virtually dead. In 2000 there were over 15 specialist languages high schools, now there are four. In the last three years, 15 head teachers of LOTE have lost their positions due to falling numbers of students. I have been trying to do some research into gender differences in 2nd language acquisition but find I get no support or encouragement I would dearly like to pursue this research to doctorate level but feel that I am working on something that the DET would regard as irrelevant. What is also particularly galling is that the targets for LOTE study, (100 hours compulsory LOTE in all schools by 1994, 25% of HSC candidates doing a LOTE by 2000 & all students K-12 studying a LOTE by 2010) so bravely trumpeted in 1990 have not only been met, but seem to have been swept quietly under the carpet. I strongly doubt that anyone in the NSW DET bureaucracy is taking LOTE study seriously and, quite frankly, I am getting sick of it. Far too many principals in NSW high schools are openly antagonistic to the study of languages. Too many school communities, particularly in the western and southwestern suburbs of Sydney are against the study of languages and, as a survey I did in a western suburbs school in 1996 showed, a large part of their antipathy was due to racism. There seems to be very little commitment to LOTE study even amongst those who have been employed in senior positions in the DET.

 49 Languages K-6 do not have the same weighting in Government schools as other KLA's - time is the enemy! Unless the department really promotes language learning within the curriculum I fear that in K-6 schools languages will disappear. This is a shame as the government has given a lot of money (eg Asia Foundation) to teachers for overseas study awards. I often feel that I

don't progress very far during a school year as each year there are new students, students who were not taught a language the previous year, depending on whether or not I taught them & staff asking that another subject be taught in RFF time as well as LOTE - all very difficult & frustrating.

 50 Students in my area do not see the relevance in learning a language and this makes it difficult to maintain interest in learning the one language for 100 mandatory hours. A focus on teaching a 'taster' of a range of languages for the 100 hours may be more beneficial in creating interest in the subject.

 51 I am a secondary trained Language teacher and have taught K - 12 for more than 20 years (13 of those at secondary level where I was asked to teach 4 different languages as no one else could).. I now teach 280 upper primary school aged boys over 4 days each week. I often feel my load is overwhelming especially when it comes to marking and report writing. The boys have only one hour study per week in language. The timetable is full with other BOS subject requirements so it makes continuity difficult and teaching 75 boys each day for one hour per class does not often allow for more lengthy and enriching cultural experiences. Most students go on to our secondary school where the primary language they have learned is not offered till Year 8 and I have had many questions as to why when the boys have had 2 years in this language. I will say I am pleased that all students in Year 7 at the secondary school must study a modern language and a classical language concurrently for a whole year. I have good communication with some of the language teachers at the secondary school. I have always felt languages are at the 'bottom' of the list when it comes to timetabling and importance. That will be hard to change.

 52 This survey does not identify the fact that non language trained teachers are teaching languages in NSW high schools. Our teachers teaching Language at the moment are trained in Design and Technology, Music and Visual Arts. This varies from year to year depending on staffing. It should be noted that we are a school that has many students with poor literacy levels and too be honest the 100 hours spent 'trying' to teach a language we are not trained in. I do believe that student literacy could be improved via the 'effective' teaching of LOTE, but unfortunately this will not occur under current staffing formula. If Governments are serious about this then they should appoint a trained teacher of Language to each school under a formula. For example, our school only has 25 hrs per fortnight out of 36hrs available for the teaching of French. An appointed teacher above our staffing formula could then go to the local primary school and teach the same Language there to fill their teaching load.

✍ 53 In NSW, Language study is mandatory for a full year rather than a semester.

I would like an opportunity to address parent body re the value of studying a language. However, our school has a parent body of roughly 10 people who turn up. The rest of the 750 parents won't come near the school. They are also not supportive when letters are sent home re bad behaviour in language classes, because they don't understand the value of language study.

✍ 54 When I answered "neutral" it was because the answer can only be case by case

More flexibility is need is this survey

Languages fall into different categories- they correspond to different "lobby groups"

Some of the findings are contradictory: for example, studies of the benefits of primary languages.

I am happy to answer further questions:

(Contact details supplied)

I would like to keep more up to date with research in applied linguistics


✍ 55 Rigid staffing formulae make it difficult to staff small classes. In reality, many elective languages classes are small and must, therefore, be cut or given reduced face-to-face teaching. An additional staffing allowance would enable more classes to run.


Ideally students should begin their study of languages in the primary school, but, in practical terms, there are too few adequately trained and skilled teachers to implement this. In many primary schools languages are not taught at all or become cultural awareness rather than language classes. At a previous school, I have taught language to Year 1 students, using total immersion, and this was very successful for both the primary and high schools. Perhaps retired languages teachers could be persuaded to work a few days per week in primary schools to help rectify this. This would require funding, but in the next few years there will be many languages teachers considering retirement, who may be happy to undertake this project. It is something I would certainly enjoy doing when I retire!

The Commonwealth funding for overseas study opportunities was one of the most effective strategies for retaining language students in the senior years.

A concerted media campaign to promote the benefits of learning a language to the broader community may help to change community perceptions of language learning, which many currently see as either useless or elitist.


I am now a Deputy principal, but still enjoy teaching my Year 7 language class. I passionately believe that all students, regardless of socio-economic background, should have the opportunity to study a foreign language in order to enrich their lives and thinking processes, improve their literacy skills in English and enhance their self confidence. To this end, I provide additional voluntary classes for those students wishing to pursue their language studies.

 56 ESL children have enough difficulty learning English they should not have to learn another language in the mandatory stages. The requirements for languages should all be standardised in Stage 6 so as to attract more students


 57 I responded as language teacher but I am also a senior executive member of the school responsible for curriculum so my views are to some extent biased by my role in the school. For the first time in an extensive teaching career I am in a school where Languages are valued, students and parents value Language learning and Languages are supported in terms of resources and staffing.


This is not the norm. My experience in languages in NSW is extensive, having worked in departmental and independent schools and worked as an Inspector of schools, and been curriculum CEO for Languages, including working on Australia-wide languages projects in the statutory curriculum authority in the state. Languages are undervalued, under-resourced as the norm - by schools, school executives, teachers, parents and students. Attitudes in Australia are similar to those in other English-speaking countries - everyone can/should speak English! I could go on about the research, the projects, steering committees, funding, lack of continuity between primary and secondary schools, etc forever!


All students should be required to learn a foreign language throughout their schooling. It is a necessary skill in an increasingly globalised world fraught with misunderstandings and conflict.

 58 I am a teacher of Latin and Classical Greek, and want to place on record the very valuable contribution of these languages to both linguistic and cultural education of secondary (and sometimes primary students). The survey did not touch upon the need for continuity in learning languages which is not often appreciated in schools ie that lessons must be frequent and regular, and that students should not be allowed to opt out easily if the going gets difficult. The emphasis on sampling elective subjects is not kind to language learning.

When the 100 hours of compulsory language was introduced in NSW (in the 1990s I think) it was announced that this would become 200 hours within a few years. This never happened. Not much of any language is learned in 100 hours.


 59 The situation in my school is relatively favourable when compared to other government comprehensive high schools. However, there is a significant shift in language study to the private school sector where the subject is seen to be an important part of a good general education. Such schools are often able to construct meaningful programs also over the K-12 continuum which does not happen in the NSW government sector. The continual restructuring of government departments, with endless cost-saving measures, has resulted in a diminution of broad systemic support for language teachers. Professional development has become generic and in response to demands for teachers to adapt curriculum teaching for specific purposes, eg outcomes based reporting, special needs students etc. There is less time, money and energy to devote to language specific methodologies which are often stagnating in many schools. ICT demands have been largely a disappointment to language teachers, either because software is below standard or because hardware and technical support is lacking.

 60 I feel that the study of languages is grossly underrated by Australian students and their parents. So much so, that there is a shortage of speakers of other languages in all areas of society - especially the armed services.

 61 As a teacher of languages for over 25 years, I am very concerned that the discussions that I was having as a beginning teacher about the value of learning a language other than English, I am still having today.

- * In NSWDET, the curriculum career pathway for teachers of languages is non-existent as faculties are dying.
- * While I agree that the syllabuses for languages seem appropriate as stand-alone documents, teaching the content and the skills to the wide range of students, particularly those with behavioural issues is extremely difficult.
- * Support from the DET is not practical - "this is the theory, you work it out for your school" There is not enough support personnel for languages teachers, many of whom are the single one in a school, with very little "power" in their school.
- * The volume of work expected of all teachers is increasing exponentially, but when you are one or two in a school, you are overwhelmed. You are still expected to do what the other faculties do, with less people to share the load.

- * The choice of language/s taught in a school often has very little to do with the community - a Principal's choice, or the availability of a teacher is more often the case.
 - * Languages is the only KLA in NSW with only 100 mandatory hours.
 - * To be a good teacher of languages, you need to spend much time developing resources that meet the needs of your children - practical, hands-on games, puzzles, etc. There are some suitable resources available but they cost a fortune.
 - * There is much talk in the media about the value of multiculturalism; this does not help the cause of languages learning.
 - * How do you change the mind-set of a parent without a huge investment of personal time and funds? The job of a teacher of languages is bigger than that of any other teacher in the school.
- (Contact details supplied)
-

 **62** Because I work in a Languages HS, my principal is committed to languages education. However, I believe that more funding is needed to provide suitable learning materials for our students.


I also think that Spanish should be promoted as an International Language rather than a Community Language. The reason for this is that Spanish is a very important language in international trade (Latin America and America) and opens opportunities to non-natives Spanish children (Australian and other nationalities) beyond high school at tertiary level and in the world of work. At the same time, there should be more articulation between high school and universities.

Migration from Latin American countries and Spain has ceased, so the number of native speakers wanting to maintain their language is decreasing. However, Spanish is very easy to learn, and proficiency can be attained within the constraints of high school. Besides Spanish culture is very attractive to Australian students.


The government should invest in an official Spanish Consultant in NSW to advise pre-service and new teachers and to improve the skills of already experienced teachers, including the integration of ICT in language teaching.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to this survey.
I would be happy to be contacted.

(Contact details supplied)


 **63** I think that language teachers should have a very good understanding of the language learning process. They should also have knowledge of current developments in language learning and teaching research and develop their


knowledge further by engaging in professional learning regularly. They should also be informed and critics users of technology in language teaching and use technology both to support learning and as a basis for learning to communicate using technologies.

 **64** I am afraid Languages is not well represented in schools. Often the teacher works on his/her own and does not have the advocacy of an interested HT. Languages has been ranked 8 out of 8 and many are trying to destroy it completely.

Go an isolated, away from world issues, impossible to understand others Australia! What a pity, we have so much going for us and so many other "others" to draw on. There is no foresight in our politics why should there be in education.

The policy needs reviewing....soon and money needs to be invested.

 **65** My languages colleagues in other schools often say that student numbers are falling due to the competitiveness of subjects in other KLAs - particularly the TAS area. We have all noticed the 'push' for languages has not been as great since the DET got rid of district languages consultants. Consultants are now state-based in Ryde. They do a marvellous job of course, but we miss the immediate access and the presence of district consultants who helped drive languages initiatives a local level. Japanese was the big push when I first started teaching about 12 years ago. Since then there has been a steady decline in large funding for programs like SLSOC (grants for students travelling overseas in school groups) and initiatives for coordinating programs between primary and high schools. Therefore, the profile of languages has slipped in my opinion. Thank goodness for the 100 hours. Without that there would be many unemployed languages teachers! We try to keep languages in our school afloat by introducing some fun whole year projects which encourage students to make food, films and posters etc. We are fortunate that we will have elective classes in year 9 and 11 in 2007. To drum up business for these classes is a constant effort, but worthwhile. Our local university also has a scholarship program for French students, something that we will be pushing in the senior years.

 **66** Many teachers I meet at HSC marking and various in-services express their frustration with the executive staff of their schools who do not value Language learning. I believe most of these executives do not speak a second language themselves and therefore do not think it is very important or interesting. There is very little support from them in many schools.


I have been lucky enough to work in a school where I had the support of Principal and deputies. All of whom had been to Japan and warmly welcomed visiting teachers and students from overseas.

I have also worked with Principals who have no interest in the visitors (and do not try very hard to hide the fact) and yet still expect the language staff to continue running the program because it "looks good" for the school!

In years 9 and 10 students can elect to continue with a language but usually the other subjects they can choose from are very "hands on"/practical subjects. Only the more dedicated students will tend to choose a language as it is seen as a difficult subject to do well in. It requires some dedication to ongoing revision and study of vocabulary (unlike many of the other subjects they could choose from.)

I have resisted believing it but recently I have come to the conclusion that with so many students with Chinese and Korean backgrounds studying Japanese it is making it increasingly difficult for other students to compete. Especially with the number of foreign students now coming to Australia attending small private schools (set up just for this purpose) doing the HSC.

Many students think it is too difficult to obtain a good result in the subject and are therefore not choosing it. Languages also do not scale favourably in the HSC relative to the amount of time and sustained effort essential to even cope with the course.


 **67** I have taught in a range of schools over the years and none has allocated enough time, money or prestige to Languages until now. The school in which I am now every happily teaching has given me less money and resources than anywhere else but it accords status to languages, other teachers try to speak the students in the language and are interested in their progress, several are learning the language, and, most important, the Principal and timetablers are aware of the value of languages.


So we are not so hard to please, really!


To improve what I am doing here the one central thing would be more in-service opportunities. We are a long way from Sydney so rarely if ever get to meet teachers who are at the forefront of any initiatives from there. The HSC papers are set by these people and it is a real difficulty not to be in closer touch. It is simply a question of the cost of the flights.


The other thing is definitely money for computers, cds, dvds, magazines and French speaking assistants, all of which bring the language alive for the students.

I'm sure my views are not revolutionary, but if anyone does wish to contact me:
(Contact details supplied)

 68 I am a first year teacher and do not have another person to "bounce" ideas off. Therefore I find myself struggling at times because I do not have a LOTE department (ie to provide feedback with lessons, exams, assessment tasks, programs) I have feel like I am just keeping my head above the water and I know a lot of first year teachers feel like this, but I can see myself leaving the system and teaching altogether. LOTE teachers in their early years need support and advice and to see other good language teachers teach (well, I do!!) Without this, I feel like I will become another statistic of dropping out within the first few years of teaching.

 69 Often there is a huge disparity between the level of knowledge and skills between students from different schools in Year 9 and 10 (Stage 5). Often students do not realise the level they need to achieve at in order to be successful in exams at HSC levels with the Continuers Languages.

 70 I have recently started a job at a 7-12 school after 5 years at a senior high school. After only two terms it is difficult to judge as there were huge discipline problems with languages in the last 4 years and I think it will take me a while to redirect the focus. In comparing the junior and senior experiences, however, it is interesting to note that many seniors are 'over' the language prejudices that are seen in the junior school. Peer pressure and jingoistic attitudes are very prevalent in the 13-14 age groups and unfortunately, many schools make this worse by loading up one language teacher with all the classes in one year and not introducing it more gradually.

 71 One of the most important factors affecting the success of a languages program is the enthusiasm and commitment of the classroom teacher.

As many language teachers teach on their own, the support of the school also becomes of paramount importance (from Faculty through to Principal).

Schools need to ensure that they offer relevant, appropriate languages / courses, taught by well - supported teachers.


Students need to see a strong connection between the value of learning the language and their own personal experiences: this can be achieved quite easily by the good teacher, who makes frequent references in class to connections between the language and the student's world.


The capacity to experience the language and culture through overseas experiences is also a very valuable tool in ensuring that language learning is relevant and meaningful to the student.

It is a great pity that one of the most effective programs supporting student study of languages in NSW (the SSLOSC program which ran for 7 years and was administered by Curriculum Directorate) was abandoned without acknowledgement of the fantastic support it had provided schools in the maintenance of their language programs.


The Parent Organisation(s) supporting this study would do well to ask why a program that supported thousands of students in acquiring excellent language skills over many years was discontinued?

Teachers and students (of any subject) should always be able to answer one question: WIIFM? What's In It For Me? (Contact details supplied)

 **72** More support needed for New teachers, (shared teaching with older teacher would help, especially for year 7/8) especially those who are placed in a school where there is a poorly structured and resourced language program left for them to try and resurrect - and less pressure on them to constantly comply with 'outcomes, outcomes, outcomes' at least in first year of teaching.

 **73** Lack of resources and support by the school and the education department are the main issues. Not many schools encourage language learning or understand the relevance of the study. Funding should be available to our students to participate in overseas study trips and organising teachers should also be supported. In this manner students would have a greater incentive to continue their studies and the availability of funding would make it accessible to more students. More positive incentives should be provided for our students and teachers.

(Contact details supplied)


 **74** As a Deputy Principal who also still teaches some language classes, I have completed this survey as a teacher, but I obviously also see the issue from the perspective of Senior Executive. I believe that my background linked with my position in the school also means that Languages have a higher profile and greater support here than in many schools. The greatest problem I perceive is the difficulty of convincing students that it is relevant to them to study another language when Australia is fairly isolated


and they do not get a lot of exposure to people speaking those languages. In my experience, large numbers of people realise the usefulness and pleasure of knowing another language in adult life and express regret that they did not do more. However this is not seen by adolescents. For this reason, I believe language study should be compulsory, like Maths for e.g. which students accept readily because it is compulsory, but still do not understand the relevance of.

The other major difficulty today is obtaining suitably qualified and skilled staff to teach the languages. In large part I believe this to be due to the perception of a total lack of a future in language teaching. Teachers are demoralised. In addition to the image problem of teaching in general, they do not have forward moving career paths (very few Head of Dept positions available) and every day is discouraging in view of the resistance of students to the subject. As a result even when schools wish to support language study it can be virtually impossible to find the appropriate staff. With overseas trained teachers I have encountered huge problems in regard to their understanding of effective pedagogy and this, together with sometimes difficulty in speaking English clearly enough for students to understand, can turn students off in droves.

It will require huge investment in language teachers, incentives at administrative levels and great commitment to changing attitudes to overcome these barriers. However, the intellectual, cultural and employment benefits of other languages are certainly great enough to justify these.
(Contact details supplied)


 75 There needs to be considerable more advocacy for the benefits of Language learning - articles in the print Media, experts being interviewed on television, Forums etc would be a good start.


 76 Parents should be more informed about the importance and benefits of learning another language.
Principal's support is extremely important to Language promotion at schools.


 77 I strongly believe that languages in schools need a greater profile.


Languages need to be seen as a priority by Principals and leaders in the school.

Parents need to be educated about the importance and benefits of language learning. WE attempt to do this by talking to parents at parent/teacher nights, school newsletters and doing presentations at open days.

 **78** Begin the study of foreign languages in the primary years
Educate the wider community about the relevance and importance of the study of languages other than English
Ensure all students (with the exception of IM students those with very poor literacy levels skills) have access to the study of languages (not just their community language)
Increase the number of hours from 100 to 200 for compulsory languages study
Decrease the class sizes from 30 to 20 (as per practical subjects) so that students can become more proficient in speaking skills - more time for speaking the language / role plays etc.!!
Introduce HSC Languages syllabi that will enable the average student to successfully study a language, instead of the present syllabi that exist in NSW which are incredibly difficult - even for gifted and talented students. This is why so few students study a language for the HSC in NSW.


 **79** I feel that language teaching should be given the same class teacher ratio levels as other practical subjects as it is impossible to really coach children's pronunciation and give them opportunities to speak if there are large class sizes.
Foreign intensive courses usually have 6 to 12 students as they are designed to be effective!!!
I teach in a private school that does not introduce written foreign language until year 4- believing that children should be introduced to the new language like their first language- orally only to begin with!!! I find it very effective and my children learn to listen well and mimic my pronunciation. However most programs including the departments involve written work from the beginning.


 **80** The parental body must work with a committed School Principal and Executive. Without such support, parental support will not succeed.

 **81** I am in the fortunate position of working in distance education (not at the Open High School which is a specialist languages distance education school) and am therefore able to offer quite a flexible curriculum to my students in terms of their individual learning needs. We offer French and German only. The mandatory 100 hours is offered in Year 7 and as an elective from year 8 onwards. The school management team is supportive of my role and, even though I work under a non languages head teacher, I am afforded strong support in terms of my professional goals. There are some supervisors (who may be parents or relatives OR teachers in SSPs) of distance education students who fail to see the value of language learning or who see it as an 'optional extra' and this is an issue I am learning to manage professionally.

The attitude of our parent cohort is variable according to their own background and the reasons why their child is enrolled with our school.

(Contact details supplied)

 82 It has been extremely difficult to staff LOTE adequately at my school from one year to the other. I have been teaching LOTE at my school since 1984 and from 1990 onwards I have had to teach non LOTE staff to teach LOTE, often providing resources, assistance and programs without any period release. This has been extremely frustrating.

 83 I feel that 100 hours of mandatory study of a language in Stage 4 has not significantly advanced the cause of language study. Students are required to study a language for one year only and many do not elect to continue language study in Stages 5 and 6. This is possibly because their language experience during the mandatory 100 hours has not been perceived as valuable, and/or because languages have difficulty in competing with the wide range of choices for elective study in years 9 and 10. In most overseas countries where languages are an important part of core curriculum, mandatory study is over at least a 4 year period, and this gives languages a more valid academic profile and enables student to reach a reasonable level of proficiency. Other core curriculum subjects are studied for longer than 100 hours in stages 4 and 5 and if we wish students view languages as having the same importance and relevance as these subjects we need to perhaps look at extending the number of hours of mandatory language.

This, however, would be difficult to achieve as the number of qualified language teachers is diminishing due to the fact that students are not pursuing languages through to tertiary level. Too many students drop out of language study after having completed the mandatory 100 hours in year 7 or 8.


Perhaps another option to raise the profile of language study would be to do away with mandatory language study and provide languages solely through an elective program. Students then would feel that it has been their choice to study a particular language and would more motivated and committed. This would also counter the effects of a negative mandatory language experience which I feel sometimes occurs with the present system.


Finally I think that it is essential that our education system remains committed to language study of, both European and Asian languages. In a global environment those who speak ONLY English, and no other language, are becoming a minority.


 84 I feel that sometimes there is a lack of continuity for students in learning languages when they progress from primary school to high school.

Also, when an Asian language is offered along a more popular European language, parents and students often choose the European language based on their perceptions of the language and/or their cultural background.

Lastly, in NSW it is compulsory for year 7 & 8 students to successfully complete the 100 hours of LOTE component as part of their School Certificate requirements. However, more often than not, students can't see the relevance of learning an Asian language and they don't put in the effort required to be able to pass the subject satisfactorily. Ideally, there should be consequences put in place for students who have failed LOTE because they have not put in any effort. What usually happens, though, there are no consequences for these students, hence the general attitude is "what's the point of doing LOTE?" This is very frustrating for LOTE teacher, who has to teach LOTE as well as motivating their students. It is doubly hard for Asian languages teachers because they have to convince their students that Asian languages are just as good as European languages.


 **85** With regards to 177, some special needs students can thrive in a Languages class particularly if the language being studied is the student's first language. However, when special needs students are integrated into main stream classes, the learning of all students may occasionally be compromised particularly if there is no teacher support.


 **86** Please note that I have recently completed a research project for my Master's Degree in LOTE (Deakin University). The project was a case study centered on the reasons that LOTE has low retention rates in secondary schools after the compulsory 100 hours LOTE (NSW). One clear response from the 100 students involved in the study was that very few students put too much thought or consultation into their secondary LOTE choices and that friendship groups are often the major reason why students choose a particular LOTE and that parents rarely have any say in what the students choose to study. Future career or study plans are only considered by a minority of students to be reasons to continue LOTE.


 **87** We have had a qualified native speaker visiting NSW for a year who has helped in a variety of schools. It has been great to have been given her contact details. She has held at least one in-service in Sydney which was extremely useful in helping teachers become more aware of youth slang, which is the language that many of our students have to master if they are to be accepted among young people from the target culture who are living in Australia or overseas.


I would like to have more ready access to native speakers as consultants re language and cultural matters. They are also needed to contribute to creating authentic resources in any register which will then be accessible to all students and teachers. Visits by native speakers to classrooms are a fabulous idea.

I was spoiled in my school for years having ready access to a native speaker who could improve the authenticity of the texts I created. It's a real challenge to teach students to express themselves concisely and authentically in the target language. Teachers have often been trained to be rather awkward and overly formal in our expression and so doomed to pass this on to our students.

 88 While I teach in an advantaged school and LOTE is here regarded as most important and accorded sufficient resources and time, I have also taught in state schools where because of money constraints I have been forced to teach two levels in the class and even two languages. Clearly these students are at a disadvantage and are more likely to drop out. If we are really committed to LOTE we have to provide adequate time and some positive discrimination, allowing smaller classes to be formed. It is important too that there be some stability in staffing.


 89 In my opinion all students should study a foreign language for their school certificate to make them truly "citizens of the world". Languages should be taught in classes made up of not more than 20 students.


 90 Language learning in Primary School is an excellent idea so long as SUFFICIENT TIME AND RESOURCES are invested. The present system in NSW of one lesson per week is a totally tokenist. If we are to succeed, students need to be taught probably from Year 3 on in small groups (max 15 students) by well trained primary language teachers who have fluency in the target language so that the lessons can be conducted largely in that language. A system resembling an immersion program as is used in Canada would best suit our purpose of making language learning effective.
(Contact details supplied)

 91 Executive, especially senior executive support for languages is vital. Languages are frequently perceived by other teachers as irrelevant and they openly communicate that to students at subject selection times, which is most

frustrating. There is a perception that languages are only for people who come from another culture and want to perfect their second language.


 **92** I feel that more funding and acknowledgment of languages needs to come from the government.
(Contact details supplied)

 **93** My experience is limited as I have taught in University and now in Saturday School rather than being involved in the full system of a high School but I feel it would be beneficial for students to learn Languages all through K to 12 as it would give continuity and enough time to progress through different topics and grammar structures.

 **94** As an experienced teacher of foreign languages in NSW schools (20 years) I have always seen that the biggest problem is the 'monolithic monolingualism' of this country. We are so far from other countries and therefore so insulated from a need to learn their language, that foreign language acquisition is not seen as important by the wider community. Of course we understand people from other cultures having their own language, but as a whole we see no need to join in. Wiser parents and educators can see the usefulness of learning a foreign language but the wider community is not convinced. This is why, after so many reviews, plans and endless enquiries etc the percentage of HSC students taking a foreign language is no higher than it was in the 60's.

One of the problems that arises I believe especially in this generation is the unwillingness of many young people to exercise the patience and perseverance needed to learn a foreign language. This society is not one which values the aforementioned qualities, and I suspect that this is a problem which affects all learning. The instant solution, the quick fix, the instant gratification, is not immediately available in the foreign languages classroom - offered instead is some fun but also hard work - as well as satisfaction. Some students still respond to this of course, but the temptation for foreign languages teachers is to 'prostitute' our courses in a vain endeavour to make them attractive to more students.

I have thought about these issues for years, but without wishing to appear discouraging, I'm afraid I see no solution. I believe it is problem arising from cultural issues which I see no way of influencing.

 **95** Some qualifications about particular questions:

118: ...a lot depends on the DEGREE of struggle, why they are struggling, and their age...

119: ... BUT the degree of proficiency attainable via a school-taught program will be very varied...

120: Not necessarily the BEST, but certainly one GOOD way...

123: I find most of the little ones are very easy to motivate and get heaps of fun and joy out of the experience ... up to the age of 10/11 anyway.

127: Some of my best vocab learners are BOYS as they are more competitive amongst themselves, and vie hard to get high test marks!

128: The morale amongst us Indonesian teachers is at a very low ebb, partly due to the devolution of this language in NSW and partly because of the woeful 'pres'' Indonesia gets, and at times deserves, via their appalling judicial decisions, corruption etc!

129: At primary level, verbal interactive games with hands-on stuff (puppets!) is so much more important than yet more IT!

132: ...only in reporting terms when I have to produce meaningful assessments & reports on about 300 students. However, I am only paid .4 of a f.t. position (that is, for my face to face teaching time) and it takes me about 5-6 days a week to actually maintain my job at the level I think it deserves, i.e. for every 4 hours of my real input, I am paid for 1, so I guess I SHOULD feel 'overworked'! I am aware that only rather weirdly vocationally motivated people who are lucky enough to be able to afford this kind of economic efficiency (like me) would contemplate such a profession... and that's not good for the future of language teaching!

133: This doesn't phase me at all because my degree is in Social Anthropol and I have years of intercultural experience before retraining as a primary teacher. However I do think that it is a hard area to cover well if you don't have a good background. (I was a little shocked at the feeble level of 'training' in HSIE provided when I did my Dip Ed... (AND LOTE wasn't even offered as an option for primary trainees!))

140: The coordination is poor EVEN within my K-12 on-site school situation...because the mentality' of the upper school admin is to ignore whatever is taught in the Junior School and just do their own stuff (let alone seek any input or attempt to co-ordinate).

142: 'relevance' isn't a word the students care about. But it isn't seen as exciting OR 'sexy' OR 'cool' OR easy OR creative, and at our school, in Y9/10 (when it becomes optional) it is often timetabled in competition with subjects which ARE, like 'Drama'!

150: It happens to be a very 'WASP' (Anglican) school community, so superficially NOT accommodating, but I think many of the parents of my kids appreciate that I am opening a door into cultural variations which they otherwise wouldn't have a clue existed...

156: The time allocated in the Junior School ranges from 30 mins p.w. for littlies to 1 hpw for Year 5 & 6. That is enough to make real progress over the years, with a language as easy as Indonesian, and it isn't seen as 'too much time' by the regular class teachers (rff structure).

156: I would favour going in the reverse direction: Make language compulsory at primary level and pump funds into getting a VARIETY of programs out there. As soon as the coverage improves, it will be easier for students to make their way in SOME language, up the ladder. (Something no longer possible to do in Indonesian in the Northern Beaches of Sydney, as it is just SO thin on the ground at High School level)

159: We have a recent new appointed K-12 principal, and I can't get a 'vibe' on her attitude yet. The former P. was very supportive and my Head of JS is VERY supportive, though monolingual himself.

166: Done informally at the JS level, but we are not 'informed' of any planning which may or may not happen at the higher levels...

170: A lack of ENGLISH may not be an impediment - some of my 'silver bullets' are ESL students with an ear for languages and a very switched on attitude to learning them!

However some sort of SLD/Literacy can make language learning a huge struggle and


needs to be carefully monitored/timed/modified...


177: Depends on how needy, their age and suchlike. Sometimes they need to prioritise other things... (Usually no more than 1 student in 30 is in this category)


OK - I'm running out of time and have to get back to reports.

(Contact details supplied):

Yes, keep me in the loop. please.

 96 We are a small monocultural town which offers only Korean to students due to limited staff expertise. Our feeder primary schools no longer offer languages to their students. We have limited access to universities/resources but strong support from our curriculum support person - (named). It is difficult to involve parents in decision making as there are no other languages available and every few resources. Due to the limited experience of people in this town (isolation - i.e. little contact with other nationalities) I feel that language teaching is not valued as much as it could be. Perhaps we need to be more active in promoting our activities.


 97 More Asian languages should be promoted to the Australian society due to the region Australia is in

 98 I am the Italian Teacher at Bellevue Hill Public School where we teach 3 languages, Russian, Hebrew and Italian. It is a primary school and I teach K-6, and I love that I can plan my program based on the progress my children make each year and that I can encourage brothers and sisters to use the language together at home. I also love that I can organise peer activities, such as making and reading books to each other. The motivation to understand

well increases when the children are going to share the information with peers. Getting to know other Italian teachers in Italy and around Sydney has also allowed me to organise "PenPals" for my stage 2 and 3 children, which has added more meaning and excitement to my "This is Me" unit and a greater understanding of cultural differences. We do not have many children from Italian speaking backgrounds at Bellevue Hill Public School. We have a large number of ESL students also from diverse ethnic backgrounds. I am quite passionate about my subject, and take a lot of time to plan exciting activities for the children. I get a lot of support in developing my own cultural knowledge from in-services and language classes run by my employer Co.As.It. My family background is not Italian, however, being a catholic, I did grow up in a very Italian community. In the eastern suburbs where I teach, the children have the opportunity to learn many languages at Secondary School. They usually come back and tell me that year 7 Italian has been easy for them. I should probably build up a partnership with the local Secondary school to possibly build a subject for the children to progress further with what they have already done. I am also excited that they get the opportunity to learn other languages, because the notice the similarities, particularly with French, and they are always so proud to show off what they have learnt.


The biggest issue for me is literature and text books essentially for LOTE learners. It is hard to find complete text books and stories that are written in Italian with the CONTEXT of Italy and with the grammatical features I want to emphasise. I want my children to learn vocab and grammar reading about ITALY, it's customs, history, geography, wildlife, landmarks, food, people, festivals, regional differences, music, lifestyle....etc. Co.As.It. is an excellent resource for these things, as is the Italian tourism commission, but it would be great to purchase class sets for the school without buying from Italy.

Networking and Professional Development are extremely important to me too and I have been to some very valuable in-services in the 4 years I have been teaching languages. Am happy to discuss any issues further with you, but must get to an appointment at present. Thank you
(Contact details supplied)


 99 As a language teacher I enjoy and get a lot of satisfaction from teaching languages. However, I do not find that I am supported by teachers of other subjects or the Department of Education. We lack resources and often have to do fund raising in order to buy books. My language classes continue to grow in size but it is often at the expense of other subjects and this causes tension between the staff. I am also in the privileged position of having a principal who thoroughly supports languages. There are quite a few parents that strongly support languages as well, however, I also find a lot of ignorance with other parents who do not see the relevance of studying a language. Being a Spanish teacher we also have the added problem of not having a

background speakers course and therefore native Spanish speakers and non-native speakers are forced to the same exam Higher School Certificate which strongly disadvantages the non-native speakers and is killing off the Spanish Continuers course.

(Contact details supplied)

 **100** I am the only language teacher in a small rural high school. I am happy to be contacted at (details supplied)

 **101** Bring back NALSAS funding


 **102** We need to be informed on a regular basis on what's going on in Languages. We are playing two roles in our schools: 1) We are the architects as well the carpenters in building the house of languages in every student and 2) We also are working in the dark.


Languages are very important in today's world.

The United Nation recommends students to learn NOT only 2 but 3 languages from Primary school. In order to be fully bilingual students need to be in contact and studying a language for at least 5 years.

If a student is offered to study a language in primary school, this student it is more likely to study the same languages at high school.

All languages are important but we have to recognise those languages with more population around the world, where this language is spoken and with whom Australia is trading around the world. This should be the parameter to rank and prioritise languages to be taught in Australian's schools. There should also be room for students who want to learn another language which is not that important in the world of trading.

 **103** We have a population of more than 400 million people who speak Spanish as mother tongue and Australia is trading with more than 20 countries who speak Spanish; apart of Chinese which is spoken for only one country, there is no other country/ies where ONE language is spoken in so many countries.

 **104** My answers are based not only on current experience, which is Distance Education only, but some reflect recent past experience in classroom teaching.

Distance Education can be very effective in teaching languages, using one on one telephone lessons regularly, and much more written work than is usually done in classroom settings. Online/ CDROM also effectively engages younger H S students.

The current frustration (2006) is the withdrawal of funds and services for this mode of delivery

PS I LOVE MY JOB, AND THOROUGHLY ENJOY SEEING STUDENTS SUCCEED IN GRASPING ANOTHER LANGUAGE!

✍️105 The issue of using ICT in class is difficult, as there are not enough computers to go around for every class in the whole school. And every subject is expected to meet the requirements of their syllabus so it means we have to negotiate the use of computer rooms.

In general I think many people, not just in my community, do not respect ALL teachers. It is not specific to Language teachers. Respect for teachers has declined over the past 10 years. The community and parents have little respect for teachers so how are students meant to have respect for teachers and learning?

✍️106 Language teaching is difficult as there are usually small classes once you reach the elective stage and schools will not allocate teaching time when the student numbers are small. They are forced into composite classes or have to enrol in some type of distance education. This tends to devalue the subject in the eyes of the students and many are not mature enough to deal with distance education - thus a high failure or dropout rate ensues.

✍️ 107 I am concerned that there are very few schools teaching Japanese in Primary school. I would like to know what is the reason for that. I enjoy teach Japanese and I believe it is best to learn language in early age. That is why it concerns me that not many primary school teaching other languages for instance Japanese.

✍️108 I am happy to give you any feedback as a language teacher.
(Contact details supplied)

✍️109 Unfortunately I think that languages are given very little value by most of Australian society. I believe that this is largely due to the fact that we are so isolated but also because we are an English speaking community.

Unfortunately with the climate of fear that has been developed in Australia at the moment I feel there is even greater need for Languages to be taught from primary school. Especially in areas which are predominantly mono-culture.

✍️110 I coordinate languages at my school but no longer teach them as I am Director of Studies but I am very passionate about language learning!
(Contact details supplied)

✍️111 Language teaching can be strengthened by :
providing more support for isolated teachers in a school esp the new teachers who lose their enthusiasm through the pressures of starting teaching and through lack of opportunities. A mentor system across schools and school systems would be good.

Incentives for these mentors such as an award could be motivating.
Using the resources of the community - getting more native speaker parents or volunteers to visit the school to make it real - maybe setting up a database of who was available for this in an area.

Making languages compulsory in Year 7 & 8 would be good - our school does the 100 hour course in Year 8 so if they had been studying in Year 6 they have to wait a year before they start again and forget a lot.


More support of language class sizes eg encourage small classes to run as often if there isn't 10 kids then they are dropped from the school timetable no matter how dedicated the kids and the teacher ends up teaching another subject they are not as well qualified to teach and not teaching their passion.
(Contact details supplied)

✍️112 Language teachers who are given classrooms that are not suitable to be so are hardly encouraged to have pride and a sense of value in their work while their counterparts in HSIE, Maths and English are given numerous rooms all with Air conditioning, nice furniture, windows and blinds.
Sometimes it just comes down to equity, language teachers are seen just to be providing the basic compulsory element and others wonder why students would actually be interested in them. Then when we work so hard to gain the students interest often it is not ENOUGH to make a class.
Many people in the community simply don't seem to see the value. Where do they think those needed for defense jobs are going to come from. Most people with a second language are not destined just to work in a duty free store or fly for Qantas. At the same time students are encouraged to learn languages they should be learning other skills. ie so they can be engineers with a language... geologists and perhaps marine biologists. From my own experience I wish I had another skill other than teaching to go with my language. Universities should encourage students to study science, commerce, etc alongside their language studies. Those just doing language studies should be counselled in other subject choices.

✍️113 As a teacher of French, Japanese and Indonesian, I am most concerned about the lack of support from the government and parent community for the

study of Indonesian. As our closest Asian neighbour with a growing economy and a huge largely Moslem population of around 220 million people, I am finding it very difficult to understand why the government is not funding the study of this language, even if only for strategic reasons. In addition, as our high-school curriculum gets more and more crowded with less academically rigorous courses, particularly in Years 9 and 10, it is not surprising that language courses suffer.


The government must act now to support the study of languages, in particular Indonesian, if it is not to be labelled short-sighted and insular in the future.

 **114** I believe that funding of programs in primary schools is of major importance. At this school the parents fund the teaching of French from years K-5. % & 6 are covered by a Linkages program from Rose Bay Secondary where I teach Years 7-11.

Most schools do not have this community based-funding resource and rely upon the funding from other sources. In NSW the major funding for primary programs seems to come from foreign governments: the Italian programs funded through COASIT. The funding arrangement has introduced third parties into the curriculum.

It is these parties that have weakened the structure of language teaching in the state. Employment of untrained teachers and a "part time attitude" toward the teaching of LOTE are killing languages in primary schools.


After 31 years of language teaching experience I am most alarmed at the state of LOTE teaching in this State.


 **115** I believe that language study in all schools can be strengthened if & when the school executive staff is committed to allowing it to flourish, when it is not deemed to be less important than physics or D & T or any other subject. Too many school principals and executives reflect the attitude to languages expressed by our government officials, that everyone in the world speaks English why should we learn other languages here. That is an extremely egocentric opinion and thought that is evident in the little value languages have in this society.

In all European and Asian countries, learning a second language from primary school is mandated. Employers reward employees who have a thorough knowledge of another language. There are many expressions around the world along the lines of 'the more languages you know the more valuable you are as a person' except for in this place.


Language teachers always have to justify their existence to the other faculties at school, to their peers and to the wider community and when there is a huge interest shown within the student body to introduce a language, this is often

not encouraged because it cuts into an already full curriculum. It is such a shame especially as the world is becoming more accessible and a much smaller place than it used to be.

 **116** If we could do anything to avoid combined classes, that would be fantastic. As you've obviously identified, languages are a cumulative skill, but due to small class sizes, we are often given combined classes (eg. 9/10 German or Year 11 Beginners and Continuers courses together).
(Contact details supplied)


 **117** A language class should not have more than 15 students. Handling 30~33 x Year 7 students in a class is an exhausting job. It is difficult to check if students write spelling correctly or if they can talk in the target language.


In Victoria, learning Languages is encouraged, so students receive 5 bonus marks on the top of HSC marks. In NSW, our situation is very opposite. For example, my students received 96 marks in HSC, but it was not even considered in his UAI. According to a Director of Studies of one of famous top class schools, UAI of Language is about 15~20 marks lower than HSC marks. All Career advisors seem to be aware of this situation. The career advisor in my school has advised all my Year 10 language students to discontinue languages when they go onto Year 11, because they will be heavily scaled down. Students do not need top up marks, but at least their raw marks should not be scaled down.


 **118** Australian public school students are generally speaking disadvantaged in the opportunity to experience languages other than English due to lack of support at state, regional and school levels. The additional benefits of engaging with another culture and exploring communication in a second language are not well recognised as valuable by many of my teacher colleagues. I have over the past couple of years watched several valuable language programs in Italian be dismantled in my district. This may be the changing nature of our cultural mix within Australia, but I think perhaps more due to an ever increasing crowded and demanding curriculum that emphasises the basics rather than learning that might extend the students. So much for "Quality Teaching" and innovative programs which language learning provides.


At my school the parents, principal, teaching staff and students, value the opportunity to learn in another language. More importantly to me personally, I get to indulge my own passion.

I sincerely hope that your survey will influence those who make language learning possible and that Australian students will have the same opportunities as so many others around the world to learn how to think and communicate with empathy and tolerance.

 **119** My school has a well established Language program, but it favours the European languages (French and Latin) at the expense of the Asian language (Japanese). French is mandatory in Year 7, and Latin is mandatory in Year 8. The only way students can select Japanese is to drop French at the end of Year 7 - not a happy option, as they all enjoy their first year of French so much. In the long run, however, my overall retention rate is quite good, but the pool of students each year, going into Year 8 and selecting Japanese, is becoming smaller and smaller.

 **120** The effectiveness of a language program in a school can be affected by the nature of the school, including the socio-economic background of the students and educational background of parents and other factors which impinge on a student's attitude/response to school. In NSW where the mandatory hours for a language program occurs in Stage 4, there are other problems such as the timing of the introduction of compulsory language study at a complex time in an adolescent's development as well as having to cope with changes from primary to secondary school. As an elective following the mandatory hours of study, languages do have many takers. Schools offer such a wide range of electives and are responsive to the needs of vocational courses that language doesn't hold a high place of value amongst students. Additionally, it is a known fact that students who do language for the HSC are advantaged if they encounter the language in the home or by foreign exchange, therefore for many students it isn't an attractive option when analysis of marks/scaling etc indicate this.

 **121** As I do not teach in a major city, access to resources, seminars, teacher training, native speakers etc. is limited. I know my students, school and community would find learning a language much more relevant and interesting if we were able to vary the lessons more eg. by visits by native speakers, cultural excursions or visiting performers etc. More funding, support and accessible resources is vital. Perhaps more networking between schools and language teachers would help; however, the age-old problem of lack of available time affects us all.

 **122** I believe there needs to be more professional development seminars offered to teachers of languages. These seminars should cater specifically to the different languages that are being taught.

✍123 One issue with language learning in schools is the amount of time allocated per week. Students should have at least 30 minutes per day. They will not make much progress if they only have one or two periods per week.

Parents' expectations also need to be modified. A number of parents have said to me that they are disappointed that their children are not fluent speakers after learning a language for seven years in the primary school. They fail to realise that it was only for 30 - 50 minutes per week for a maximum of 40 weeks per year. I wonder how much Maths or English would be achieved in that amount of time.

Another difficulty is having languages as an elective in years 9 and 10 on the same line as art, design/technology, computing, textiles, food technology, sport, etc etc. It is more of an academic subject having to compete with practical subjects which are seen as more fun and relevant anyway. "After all everyone speaks English in Europe. What's the point of trying to learn their language?"

Language learning needs to be seen and treated as a core subject.

✍124 I feel that the positive feel about languages at MHS revolves around like/ dislike for the teacher. Class sizes are small in non compulsory years due to limited subject choice (ie being able to choose 2 subjects from heaps) rather than dislike for subject
There are heaps of factors that interact- too many to go into here. Thanks for this opportunity though.
(Contact details supplied)

✍125 Research has shown that there can be higher levels of achievement in other subject areas when combined with Language study.

- The current NSW government does not view Languages as being an important part of the curriculum. This view may be historically based or the government simply does not place any value on Language learning in our society.

✍126 I definitely feel that languages are "at the bottom of the barrel" as far as class allocation timetabling etc. The "value" of languages seems to be declining, and the idea that it is only for the brighter kids, or "Japanese is too hard" for kids to learn eg. script writing etc , astounds me.... Perhaps the "method" of teaching needs to be revised, and "specialists/ experienced"

generic teachers of that language need to be included in University teacher training..... I have basically taught myself, as I was lucky enough to have language grant money at a private school I was at, and I went to ALL in-service lectures and workshops for the stage 6 JPN syllabus (continuers) and was lucky enough to "learn" from experienced great people who actually wrote the textbooks !!!! We also have BRILLIANT JPN language consultants in Sydney who are SOOOO helpful and we have a great network BUT as far as support from the school I work at There is never money, and I get the feeling languages aren't currently valued.... (I have only been here this term , and will be here all next year).... Our strong Japanese program can be attributed to the wonderful dedication of the Japanese teaching staff here whom I am filling in for..... Still ... I am VERY happy to be teaching Japanese, and intend to keep morale up, and keep doing my best to encourage students and other staff (as well as the broader community) on the VALUE of language learning for future generations.

(Contact details supplied)

✍127 Funding is the main issue that we tackle at school. Small faculties don't seem to get much money in annual budgets. Raised budgets may assist in raising profiles, resources and student opportunities.

✍128 1. Students should be exposed to a variety of languages in primary school instead of concentrating on one. If students don't like a particular language and don't get to taste others it can turn them off language learning for ever. Also, many students face the situation on entering high school that they are in a LOTE class with students who have no experience in the target language. They go back to basics and find this boring.

2. This is also true of high school Years 7 and 8. The 100 hours compulsory LOTE study can deter students. Receiving a taster in a variety of languages i.e. a different one each term allows students to experience different cultures, languages and different approaches to language teaching. Students might love European languages but dislike Asian languages or vice versa.


3. Approaches to language teaching in some schools is very boring and non communicative. That is, reading and writing skills are the focus with very little communicative activities. Students need to feel like they can communicate in the target language.


4. Secondary education offers so many choices these days that getting the numbers to run elective LOTE classes can be difficult.


(Contact details supplied)

✍129 I am a fully trained primary school teacher but do not have special language qualification in the Asian language I teach as this is only one of the subject I teach as a part of my RFF role in the school.

I teach students in multistage classes in a very small rural school so the main idea is to expose students to another culture as well as the language thus broadening their knowledge, tolerance and understanding of other races and cultures.


 **130** I see the benefit of having partner schools in other countries, and regular exchanges between our school and the partner schools. Our students are much more aware of other cultures and the wider world either by having visiting students in their classes or by participating in the exchange by hosting overseas students or travelling to the partner school. Support for these types of programs would help to increase the profile for languages in schools and the wider community, and help to communicate the role of languages in developing the student's knowledge of the world, as well as tolerance and respect for cultures different to their own. The use of e-mail exchanges between partner schools has a similar effect to the exchange trips, helping our students (who are so isolated from the rest of the world because they live in an isolated continent) to see languages as "real" and spoken by real people. Support for these types of programs could be through help and support for setting up infrastructures and release time for teachers who are organising exchanges - a very time consuming activity.


 **131** To increase the effectiveness of language learning and teaching, a small class size like a practical subject should be taken into consideration.

 **132** I teach French in a NSW Primary School and have done so for 10 years. Children have one lesson per week. Since I began teaching French many other schools which were teaching a LOTE have fallen by the wayside. I have been very lucky to have had the support of Principals, although I'm not too sure about the one we have now. I have ensured that French at my school has as high a profile as I can possibly give it, to make sure it doesn't get dropped. Many parents choose our school because of French, but a great many don't see any relevance. People are often surprised to find out that a Primary School teaches a language. I would feel a lot more secure if the subject was mandatory and not just left to the whims of the Principal.

 **133** Should make Esperanto an option.

NSW Principals said

 **1** As the principal of a senior campus, all language study is for the HSC and many of the questions are not relevant to my particular situation, although I have views on many of them. I think the Dept of Ed should look at some sort of differential staffing for language classes in the senior school as it is very difficult under the current formula to justify a small language class against a large class in another subject. I am keen to promote the languages my campus offers but very small classes sometimes mean we cannot run particular classes.

 **2** In my school community I have many parents who speak languages other than English. Many of my French speaking parents come into the classes and work with students supporting the teacher. My Japanese teacher frequently has Japanese parents join the class to either help with reading and pronunciation or make delectable Japanese food. We have sister school relationships with schools in Japan and China and travel to Japan every year and will be travelling to China in 2007. We have also arranged language/cultural exchange trips to France over the past few years. We are keen to host visiting school groups and have many students and families who are willing to take on language buddies. I am also willing to (and frequently do) host educational delegations from other countries in my school not only to show case what we are doing but also to increase the profile of languages and cultural exchange in my school community. From time to time members of my parent group also attend these delegations/visits and provide a parents perspective to the group. As my school is quite multicultural many students in senior years choose their background language to study. They do this through the open high school. However this school provides only a limited number of places; which for schools such as mine is often not enough. As language classes in the senior school are frequently small (10 or less) I would like support for language teachers that is the allocation from staffing to support smaller class sizes in languages, so that the rationale used for say mathematics and English is not across the board. It then depends on the Principal whether a small language class will run in senior years. Having a central school that teachers one or more senior languages is often not what students want who are attached to their school and don't want to travel. This alternative frequently means they do the language by correspondence or they drop the language. I love the idea of my parents who have skills in the languages being taught in my school being involved in the classroom on a number of different levels. It is excellent for the children and also the teachers.

✍ 3 Our school is fortunate in that we are sponsored in our delivery of the Modern Greek Language, through the Community Languages Program. This means that we have a qualified language teacher able to teach from Kinder to Year 6. In other schools in which I have been principal, classroom teachers tried to learn the Japanese language and incorporate it in their classrooms or we'd try one teacher taking the Release from Face to Face load. This meant not every class came in contact with the language. As staff moved on, so did the expertise in the school. Many teachers reverted to teaching a European language from their school days eg French or German, but as the NSW DET took the mandatory requirement away from the teaching of languages, generally the teaching of a language in primary is more ad hoc. Anecdotally we have found that students who have studied a language in primary go onto high school and study a language- usually a different one to primary, but still studying. To be properly resourced there needs to be trained language teachers and a timetabled approach to the teaching of languages.

✍ 4 With more than 47% Non English speaking background children, some of whom have parents who do not speak adequate English, our emphasis is on building up expertise in speaking and writing English. The diversity of language backgrounds of the community does not help in the teaching of languages.

✍ 5 Difficult to answer questions on classroom management and student engagement when we have four different teachers involved in the delivery of language courses.

It has been my experience, over more than 20 years, that the success of languages in a school rises and falls in direct correlation to the passion and commitment of the person delivering the subject.

✍ 6 Languages' learning in NSW has been bedevilled by the decision of the Carr government to make it compulsory for all Stage 4 students. This has led to classes full of students with no interest and no intention of continuing the study.


It has also led to the "dumbing down" of courses to a level of developing some cultural appreciation of the society taking precedence for students over learning the language (albeit in my school, with a lot of excursions to good restaurants).


Finally, it has led to Languages teachers being renowned for giving the highest marks in the school (a 92% mean for Year 8 was the highest I have seen) to try to persuade students to choose the courses as electives in Year Nine.


In my school, we have continued to offer four languages. This has led to much intra-faculty competition as teachers have vied for those students wanting to learn a language.

My suggestion for improving the teaching of languages in this state is:

- a) drop the compulsory component in stage four (years 7 and 8). It is a disaster.
- b) adopt a district approach so that students can continue learning the same language from kindergarten through to Year 12
- c) have classes taught outside normal school hours to allow for this
- d) properly fund and plan the courses so that talented and committed students can spend meaningful amounts of time immersed in the language in host countries

 7 My school is an intensive English high school. Whilst we do not teach other languages we do recommend and encourage our new arrivals students to maintain their first language. We also advise parents of the importance of ongoing first language development and assist them in locating community school programs for their child to enrol in or, ensure that they enrol in language electives when they transfer to their next school. We also provide bilingual support to students as they participate in their English language acquisition program here at this school.

 8 In NSW secondary students are required to complete 100 hours of a language. At our school a majority of students approach this as a hurdle to complete rather than a foundation for further study. They report that they see little relevance in our languages program and cite the fact that only French and German are offered (a restriction on the training and commitment of the teacher). Attempts to start Indonesian failed after a four year trial. Teacher deemed it too difficult for our students and taught it to achieve that result. There are no elective classes formed due to lack of numbers and so languages is confined to years 7 & 8 (mandatory course).


 9 The mandatory 100 hours of languages in secondary school should be abandoned. It is ineffective and does not lead to an increase in interest or understanding of languages by students. Evidence of this is the very limited number of students who elect to continue their study of language into Stage 5.


The 100 hours in Stage 4 would be much better spent supporting specific literacy or numeracy programs, or addressing curriculum or welfare issues specific to each school.

Due to the limited number of language teachers available, schools frequently have no choice in what language(s) they offer and there is little, if any, continuity between primary and secondary schools, especially when multiple primary schools feed into the one secondary school.

Many language teachers experience difficulty managing classes because students and their parents do not see the relevance of the curriculum.

I support the value of languages, having studied 4 years of French at school and also Indonesian at tertiary level, however, the current model of delivery in NSW secondary schools is totally ineffective and should be abandoned.

 **10** I feel that learning well a language in Australia is failing because most of the time it is English that is used instead of the actual language. The European approach where students use at all times the language taught is to my opinion a much more productive approach. In NSW students both in schools and Universities can pass in a language with even HD by answering most part of exam papers by using English.

 **11** I note that Languages learning has been described in very generic terms with no possibility to respond in relation to the different types of languages programs and their relevancy, except for the Asian language issue. What about community languages? Have you thought as to the importance of their role in our society as opposed to the learning of a second language for cultural, intellectual or developmental reasons? When you ask about how people value languages learning, which languages do you mean? I personally value all language learning experiences, but some parents may say no to 'foreign' languages programs and 'yes' to community languages programs, or vice versa. The background of the responder would make a difference in this respect.

If parents/people in general understood the true value of children maintaining or learning as beginners the language of their forebears and how that helps them with their self esteem, their relationships' and with their English literacy, then they may overcome the obsession with the all-importance of English. If others of English speaking background could see, as is the case in Europe, the value in having the minds of a whole other people opened to them through learning a second language, then languages programs would thrive. But no one is saying these things publicly, politically or economically. Maths is compulsory, it 'means' nothing but students do it because they have to and then find out

✍ 12 I am the Principal of an independent Muslim school and very frustrated with the teaching of our Arabic language from K - 12. For the past 20 years I have tried to get our teachers (who are now all recent graduates from University) to teach the language so that it is interesting, relevant and stimulating - without success. Most of the teachers teach it in a traditional, boring and archaic way and the kids don't like it. I would really like more support from successful initiatives in other languages to stimulate the teaching of language in our school and provide alternatives to our teachers.

✍ 13 As a high school whose NESB is 97% language learning is of high priority. Having the staff to teach a range of languages though is limiting but we offer all we can. Students at my school speak at least two languages most speak more. Formal education in first language is often done after school hours through private classes or DET Saturday school. For students wishing to study language many students - about 40 + attend Saturday school run by DET or do their language through distance education with the assistance of Language staff.

We have noticed a fall in students in my school choosing language based subjects at my school, many students opting for vocational education courses - parental support for career options in Australia is more of a priority.


Many of my students needs are in learning English and English literacy as they have not been in Australia for a long time. 90% of the parents would say English is the top priority so that they can function in Australia. Most students have only been in Australia a short time. Over 200 of the students at FHS are refugees.


✍ 14 Funding and time are the 2 key issues. This is an area where specialist teachers are a necessity. Perhaps this could be an area for Middle Years schooling to consider, with some flexible staffing arrangements - allowing High School Language specialists to work in Primary schools.


✍ 15 Our school has for 15 years, until last year, been part of a distance education programme whereby our Year 4, 5 and 6 students learned Indonesian. The students participated in one "on line" lesson per week for 30 mins with an equivalent time for in class and at home activities...we also held cultural days to support this area of study. This was funded via NALSAS and the NSW Country Area Program. Alas our funding was considerably reduced over the past 3 to 4 years so that eventually we had to withdraw from the programme. As we are a community with limited finances we could not bridge the financial gap that emerged- there was also some pressure at the


local level following the Bali bombings, to move to a language other than Indo.

Our experience with students studying a language in even this limited fashion was that it provided another arena in which kids (dare I say, even at times those with "special needs") to excell!!!!

 **16** I am a teaching Principal in a small Catholic school. I have limited background in Indonesian and this language is promoted within my Diocese. I do what I can to encourage the inclusion of Indonesian within our curriculum but it is not a priority for other teachers within my school. It is also not a priority for parents within my community. In my early stage one class simple Indonesian greetings and very basic language is spoken but this is not followed through in continuing classes. Children do receive input on the Indonesian culture through specially organised cultural days. I do not believe that most primary teachers, especially in small rural schools, have the knowledge or confidence to deliver a quality second language program. Teachers also struggle with a crowded curriculum and although they may wish to include language sessions in their classes I am afraid that these lessons are the first to be shelved if classes are behind in other KLA's.

 **17** The only language programme we run at our school is exposure given by teachers who are Italian. The children enjoy the lessons, but it is treated more incidentally than formally. I have been at previous schools where Japanese was a formal weekly lesson. This seemed a good idea at the time but there was no follow through at secondary school. My daughter is a Yr 10 German language student and her subject will not be offered at the school for years 11 & 12 so she will enrol in the O-Ten course. Needs to be a better sense of appreciation and continuity at all levels. The study of Languages seems to ebb and flow. (Contact details supplied)

 **18** The biggest issue of having language programs in most schools is the lack of qualified teachers in Primary Schools. If there is a competent teacher appointed to the school then a program is implemented. Without the right human resources, extra language courses are not run.

 **19** My experience learning languages in high school was positive. I found that learning European languages greatly enhanced my understanding of English. However, I have never been able to converse in any of the languages that I studied in school although I can still read and pronounce them.

✍ 20 I am committed to the teaching of languages in schools. Recently NSW celebrated 25 Years of Community Language programs in schools. I think this should have been given major media coverage as it is an important plank in keeping Australia a harmonious multicultural society.


Governments need to back programs with adequate funding and promotion of languages.

✍ 21 Parental support in Primary School helps to bring a realistic view of the usefulness of language.

✍ 22 In Dubbo we have a plethora of students being trained as PDHPE and primary teachers.
I am lucky to have 2 Japanese trained teachers; but to sustain French as well as Japanese I have had to pick up the teaching of French, as the ONLY applicant for a part time position was the local French Chef.
Whilst he has excellent language skills, as he could not be placed on a class by himself, I resorted to paying him to refresh my French skills and then I taught the students.

✍ 23 Needs to be promoted at state and federal level. If this community did not have families with LOTE background and the skills and interest of a teacher who was initially employed for other reason I doubt whether the program would operate.

NSW Language Advisors said

 **1** Generally speaking, in comparison with Japan or with NZ, Australia, as far as I know about NSW, is doing very well in teaching languages. I can communicate with most of Japanese teachers in secondary schools in Japanese language effectively and many of non-native speakers have very high level of language skill.


However, still some of them focus on only programming and preparation for HSC rather than trying to improve their level of Japanese. It is partly because teachers are very busy and they do not have enough time to do everything.


Language teachers have more tasks to do than teachers of other subjects. They must keep or improve their level of language which they teach and must prepare the class and discipline their students at the same time. Some of them are really busy and burnt out sometimes.

Another concern is language education in primary schools in NSW. Once we organised a workshop for primary school teachers and we had to cancel it because of the very small number of participants. Some of very good primary school teachers leave primary schools and go to secondary schools because they do not have enough job any more. Less and less primary schools teach Japanese in NSW. This is my great concern.

NSW DET and government must do something to maintain our language courses.

(Contact details supplied)

 **2** The biggest problem is the dearth of language teachers and this is a cyclical problem because many students and families do not see the value of languages - especially in the country - and so there are fewer graduates in language. It is a huge problem in the country where a school's LOTE provision can be interrupted suddenly because of the resignation, leave of the LOTE teacher. To fulfil compulsory language study provisions, schools then may have to change languages and purchase new resources. Confidence and competence in a language only comes with consistent study with a fluent and capable teacher.

 **3** The issue of gender should be addressed also. The resources available for languages teachers do not always consider the variety of activities needed to stimulate students of all ability levels and various competencies.


2. There is little if any linkage between the languages taught in a primary school and its neighbouring High school.

Because we are a K-12 school, we can attempt such a linkage.

3. There are few tertiary trained students encouraged to become languages' teachers because there is no real stimulus in the community for language learning.

4. The training of any languages' teacher should involve a sabbatical period in the country where that language is spoken so that the competency of the teacher is ensured.

Nothing is more of a turn off than a teacher who cannot speak the language with confidence and competence in front of a class.


 **4** I am the State Coordinator of Aboriginal Education for the NSW Catholic Education Commission.
(Contact details supplied)

Right across the board in all education systems as with all things Aboriginal since the Reconciliation Bridge Walk Indigenous languages are being marginalised . The resourcing/funding and most importantly the commitment is either tokenary or zero.

Indigenous Languages play a huge part in our identity. I have often read that the first thing that invaders around the world do is to destroy the language of the country they are invading . This even happened to the Irish with Gaelic.

It is time for all Governments to 'Walk the Talk" on the value they say they place on Indigenous languages.

All language money that is allocated to education systems needs to have a annexed and fair portion set aside for Indigenous languages. When it is put in one bucket Aboriginal languages get drowned.

 **5** I found it difficult to answer some of the questions above that required sweeping generalisations and for those questions I tended to answer neutral. Some schools are doing an excellent job in teaching languages, reporting fully to parents, evaluating their languages programs, involving the community in decision-making etc. Some principals are very supportive of languages programs and others are not. Some teachers are highly skilled and really inspire and motivate their students, others do not. Some teachers are highly qualified and competent speakers of the language(s) they teach and others are

not. In some schools teachers of languages are teaching outside of their curriculum area because no qualified teacher is available.

Public perceptions of the value of learning a language is low, and is not helped by the way monolingualism and monoculturalism is promoted in the general community by many political leaders.

Learning languages should be promoted for educational and intellectual reasons, and not merely linked to economic or security reasons. In recent years the number of students learning Indonesian has declined as Indonesia has been demonised in Australian eyes following events such as: East Timor, the Bali bombings, Jakarta bombings, JI, Schapelle Corby, the Bali Nine etc.

It is not enough learn about a country without engaging with and understanding the close links that exist between language and culture. True intercultural understanding cannot be divorced from knowledge and understanding of the language.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond.

NSW Tertiary Language Teachers said.....

✍ 1 I would also suggest that it is time to make a language compulsory not just at primary and secondary levels, but at tertiary level as well.

✍ 2 Language teaching is grossly under funded at all levels of Government. Australians need to speak Chinese, Spanish and Chinese much as Europeans expect to speak French, English and German. The three core languages for global trade and commerce are the three languages that I have suggested as important to Australia. However, we also need to learn Indonesian, Thai and Japanese if we are to develop and maintain good relations with our neighbours.

✍ 3 Eliminating the former emphasis on Asian languages has been disastrous for the nation in terms of Australian youth better understanding the region of which they are an integral part.

I think that learning a language should be compulsory within primary schools. It does not need to be the same language in secondary school, nor does it need to be the same language in university. A hundred flowers should be allowed to bloom, depending on the region and expertise of the school or university. We have arrangements with all the Sydney-based universities in terms of sharing credits. Languages like Thai and Vietnamese and Tagalog could appeal to large numbers of students, but there is no university to teach the subjects. Initial funding is crucial. Re Arabic and Indonesian - these languages need more support, and the building up of a critical mass to cater for understanding these cultures in the future.


(Contact details supplied)

✍ 4 Some questions too limiting. For instance, All children CAN learn a language, but not all to the same level.

Some children find language learning intensely stimulating; others do not.

Special ed. children should not be withdrawn, but allowed to move at their own pace within their own group.

✍ 5 Make language learning compulsory for all students at tertiary level. Fund language learning at appropriate rates at tertiary level.


 6 Language learning provides children and adults with a stimulating experience in its own right, potentially valuable skills for work, travel and relationships, and a broader vision of the world: essential in our complex and multicultural society.

I would love to see language learning as a serious part of the school curriculum for all children of primary age and secondary age - ie. with serious time allocation, ample resources and well-trained teachers.

However, the following drawbacks to such a vision include:

- the Australian community in general does not recognise the value and interest (and possibility!) of language-learning for all school students, so any language learning occurs against a background 'murmur' of antagonism
- many parents have had a negative/non-existent experience of language-learning in their own schooling, so they tend to 'talk down' language-learning to their children
- the school curriculum is already crowded with equally essential learnings, so many teachers are not in favour of such an apparent 'frill' as LOTE in the curriculum
- many LOTE teachers have been 'roped in' to teach LOTE's with very little background knowledge and support, so that programs may not be as stimulating as is crucial if the general community (and fellow-teacher) distrust of LOTE is to be counteracted. That is, compulsory LOTE learning may be a two-edged sword.

Alas, I don't see any easy solution to this dilemma. Perhaps the quiet success of those teachers who are sharing the LOTE magic with group after group of students, plus the increasingly multilingual nature of Australian society, and the patent need for intercultural and hence inter-lingual skills in the modern world, may exercise a trickle effect...? Maybe we need to find an Australian character who can embody a multi-cultural outlook and who has credibility with the great Aussie public: the public response to Steve Irwin's passing gives one pause for reflection on just what influences the thinking of Australians at large ...

 7 Please note: I am a RETIRED tertiary language teacher, having given up full-time teaching eight years ago. This may explain some odd things in my replies, such as the large number of Don't Knows. However, I have some contact with students as I have taught courses occasionally on a casual basis, and I keep up contact with colleagues.

Problems which I see in promoting languages include:

MOTIVATION. Australians generally do not understand the value of language learning. We are a chronically monolingual country. Those who could act as role models, e.g. politicians, are among the worst offenders.

Many of us read not long ago about a leading politician who was reviled by his colleagues as a show-off when he addressed visiting Chinese dignitaries in Mandarin. Language lobby groups need to press their case at the highest possible level; otherwise I can't see much hope of change.

QUALITY. We need to understand the importance of learning languages to an advanced (and therefore professionally useful) level. A smattering of a language is of little use. We must take languages seriously - or even better, as serious fun!

Hence some apparent contradictions in my answers. In theory I would love my children (if I had any) to learn languages in school, but I would need to be assured that the quality of teaching in their particular school was high enough to make it worthwhile.


ENGLISH TEACHING. We need to tackle the poor quality and limited objectives of much English teaching. How many teachers have a basic understanding how language works? Since ALL teachers are in effect teaching language (and through language, as the basis of their other subjects), ALL teachers need a thorough knowledge of basic applied linguistics and of English structures.

Such a requirement need not in any way disadvantage prospective teachers of non-English-speaking background. People who have learned English as a second language are often, necessarily, more aware of its structures.


An improvement in English teaching will obviously benefit other languages too.

THE SO-CALLED COMMUNITY LANGUAGES. (I don't know what the latest official term is, if there is one, but you know what I mean.) The vast linguistic and cultural heritage of a whole generation of post-war immigrants has been largely SQUANDERED because of our failure to take quality language study seriously, our failure to help the immigrants' children see the value of quality language study. We now have the invaluable GIFT of new cultural capital in more recent immigrants and refugees from Asian and Arabic-speaking countries. All the signs are that we are going to squander this too. How shall we stop that happening?

VISION. Languages need to be part of our VISION of the Australia and Australians we want to see in the future. Since we belong to the Asian region, I would like MOST young Australians to have a basic working knowledge of at least one Asian language and culture. Some may prefer a major European language, and that is fine too. Some may wish to devote their time to getting a thorough knowledge of their parents' or grandparents' language and culture (Italian, Greek, Arabic, Maltese, whatever... and that is terrific. All of these would be immensely valuable. and if you've studied a second language well, it's easier to develop a third and fourth.


 **8** [My interest has to do with finding ways to connect School language learning with University language learning in my area. This could provide a professional perspective to the teaching of languages in general](#)

(Contact details supplied)

 **9** Before coming to work at TAFE, I taught in NSW High Schools for 20 years. It is interesting that Language teachers spend a lot of time justifying their existence to their colleagues.

In schools where the principal was supportive, the Languages programs thrived, but in those where the principal was less than supportive, it was an uphill battle. It was often easier to win over the initially hostile students than it was to convince the staff and many parents.


Ironically the majority of students came to enjoy their classes and those who continued on to the higher levels often said it had improved their English. After 10 years at TAFE, we are now faced with reduced hours for courses as a result of reduced funding and an unsupportive, Anglo-centric Dean.


 **10** I believe that languages other than English (LOTE's) should most definitely be introduced at the primary school level. My kindergarten aged child would love to learn a foreign language in her school, even if it were offered only for an hour to two per week. I am a university lecturer at an Australian university, originally from the United States. I took two foreign languages (French and Spanish) for a total of five and three years respectively in high school in the United States, and double majored at uni in both languages.


I was dismayed to learn here of the lack of consistency and continuity in language teaching at the secondary school level. I have observed that students here are often offered an introductory class in foreign language in Australia at high schools, in which students are given, for example, 4 weeks French, 4 weeks of German and 4 weeks of Indonesian. They are then encouraged to choose a language to study. I would prefer to see the elimination of this type of smorgasbord class, and simply require all high school students to take at least one year of a language at high school level (the standard in the U.S. is a required 2 years of study of a foreign language in high school - those planning on studying at uni typically study at least 3 years, and often 4 or 5 at high school). A large majority of my uni students have commented on how much English grammar they have learned through the study of a LOTE, and how their writing skills have improved as a result. They become LANGUAGE AWARE, not only in the LOTE, but also in English.

I perceive little coordination between secondary and tertiary institutions on the teaching of languages, and at the institution where I teach, there is a depressingly low level of support (even amongst the Humanities faculty!) for students to study foreign language. University administrators view LOTE classes as labor intensive and expensive to run. Internationalisation policies are concerned with importing full-fee paying students, rather than


internationalising Australian students (through LOTE subjects and study abroad) in an increasingly globalised economy. There are no LOTE requirements for any of the international degrees offered at this university - a sad reflection on the poor regard that languages is given here. While Asian language study should be encouraged, a very low number of students request to take Asian languages or sign up when either Indonesian or Chinese is offered. Spanish seems to be widely attended and requested, as students not only perceive it to be useful for travel to a large number of countries, they also see it as useful for future job prospects, due to Australian trade and contacts in Latin America. It should be taught more at secondary school level here. I think the study of German in most Australian high schools reflects this language's importance in the 1960s and 1970s, but few students will have the opportunity to continue the study of German at tertiary level.

 **11** As a NSW TAFE institution funding is constantly being eroded for LOTE programs. The LOTE section has to fight for every cent and has to repeatedly justify the need for LOTE programs. In a world of cross cultural conflict the support of LOTE programs is essential to raise the awareness of and educate the Australian public about other cultures. Recently new statements by the federal government regarding migrants and learning English show complete ignorance of second language learning. Maybe all politicians should attempt to learn a second language in order to understand their own people.

 **12** The Australian government was not consistent in their support for language education, for example they withdrew funding for the NALSAS project BEFORE its final evaluation was carried out. Parents should be proactive in this matter, eg by talking to the teachers and principals about ways for putting pressure to government so that funding for similar projects can be granted in the future. This is important because teaching-learning materials can be kept up-to-date through such projects, and resources can be made available to both teachers and students.


 **13** At this university, a stigma is being constructed towards academics who teach and research LOTE. The label, 'you're just a language teacher', is demeaning and does not reflect the immense pressure put on LOTE academics to maintain their language proficiencies (both native and non-natives alike), to conduct meaningful research which is not belittled by others in the university (typically the case), and for LOTEs to be funded appropriately in human and physical resources, that is, language labs. which are state of the art. There is a misperception about language teaching and learning in the tertiary sector. Little research has been done on it, for one thing. Most interest is in primary and secondary LOTE. Tertiary LOTE is the

forgotten part of the full mosaic. I am burned out, disillusioned and not particularly trusting of any government administration at the moment. Has the last 26 years of my professional life as a LOTE educator been such a waste of time and effort? In many ways, yes since I have seen the struggle to get LOTEs acknowledged at the secondary level but recently they have been completely abandoned and replaced with what comes down to an English only type of mentality (e.g. recent calls for notices on shop windows to be in English and for religious teachings to be conducted in English). Departments which teach LOTE in universities need to get their act together because it seems that we will have to argue why the university should keep on supporting us. There is no textbook designed for Australian tertiary students of Japanese, for example. Textbooks don't get any recognition by DEST as research, so why bother writing one. Applications seeking resources for LOTEs are rarely funded and they have to compete with others from Engineering and Medicine. Who is going to fund a lab. which can be used for LOTE teaching and research, when a microscope can be used in the fight against cancer? The minister's recent statement (Hon Julie Bishop MP, Minister for Education, Science & Training:- LANGUAGES EDUCATION NATIONAL SEMINAR: CANBERRA 30-31 OCTOBER 2006 30 October 2006) is in three words, full of bullshit.


 **14** I would like to be contacted about the results of this survey in order to find ways to improve language teaching and perceptions of language acquisition in Australia.

I think that at least one foreign language should be made compulsory from year 1 to year 12. Language teachers are not well trained at the university because of the limitations of the number of language units they can take.

(Contact details supplied)


 **15** All universities in this country are threatened by the anti-intellectual, anti-education policies of the Howard Federal Government. My university pursues an agenda, either through weakness or because it simply has no choice, predicated entirely upon the need for grasping ever-diminishing government funding. As languages play no part in this agenda their future is seriously threatened (as are the Arts in general). In my opinion, the single largest threat to Languages in Australian universities is the utterly ill-conceived push towards vocational training. As the so-called Bachelor of Education is turning out teachers who have nothing to teach, the market will soon be flooded with tradespeople who have had no opportunity for an education in anything other than the limited paradigm of their trade, which will in turn lead to the formation of a society of ignorant bigots unable to conceive of or tolerate cultural difference in any form. This is an extremely


dangerous trend, and it is heartbreaking to watch the Federal Government deliberately seeking to destroy education in this country. Languages are hanging on by a thread in Australia, and their loss will be the nation's.

 **16** I have been teaching Japanese in Japan and in Australia last 10 years. In Japan I taught JFL (Japanese as a Foreign Language) to adult learners and in Australia I taught Japanese in Primary school (Yr 5 & 6), high school (Yr7-12) and have been teaching at university.

I strongly agree that it is important to learn LOTE (but any LOTE) and high school students need to be encouraged to study LOTE until Yr12. In order to do that, the schools, parents, and teachers should be supported by state organisation and Australian government.

I am happy to be contacted by e-mail for further questions etc.
(Contact details supplied)

-  **17**
1. More NSW State funding to be allocated to languages education -- as a guide, it should be at least what Victoria sets aside for languages education.
 2. NSW should include languages in the primary syllabus.
 3. The 1991 "100 hours" policy should be updated. We are falling way behind other states and territories.
 4. We need a charismatic key figure to "champion" languages education throughout Australia.
 5. Funding for more teacher education places to be able to produce more language teacher graduates to provide more teachers to resource school programs.
 6. Extra \$\$ required for teachers' short term international teaching experiences (see research of Harbon et al)
 7. media campaigns to bring the issues to public debate.
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 **18** I have just conducted research on Sydney principals and their attitudes to the learning and teaching of languages (l and t); this was raised as a major issue in my Masters study of 1997-8. The major findings of the 2006 research will be presented in BABEL, probably in the December issue. I was surprised that many findings of a much earlier report (Eltis and Cooney 1983) were still being raised today (for example, see head teacher issue discussed below). The main positive raised by principals was the opportunity to experience cultural learning while learning a language. Principals praised the exchanges, excursions, special days, visits and study trips on offer at their schools. Formal examination results came close behind, seen as being very

important. The main negative raised was staff supply and the consequences of staff changing schools.

I was personally concerned at the apparent division between public and private schools, their support and provision for languages l and t and the possible consequences for students. Some private school principals found it hard to keep up with the demand for languages, having to provide extra space, in one case an extra building. Because my respondents were in the main at public high schools, the divide could be even greater than suggested in this survey report. Re parents: two principals raised the issue of parental pressure to provide the "home" language; one noted that this had been trialed unsuccessfully in a neighbouring school and the other felt that only a small group of students would select the language and was resisting its introduction.

In NSW, many Head Teacher languages positions in public schools have been reclassified by the principal; this imposes enormous amounts of paperwork on the individual language teachers as the new HT may have little idea about the issues facing languages and can usually not speak a foreign language, therefore is unable to program or process literature. The language teachers' classes are already preparation-intensive, but they are given no extra time to complete the paperwork, nor are they given time and funding to plan, organise, liaise, book, budget etc etc for the excursions, languages days and overseas programs that parents and students expect. Often there is a small staff and the one person can be required to rewrite programs and plan all excursions and activities, an additional hour to three hours per day for no pay. In my case, school trips came at a personal cost of up to \$5,000 and took 2 years to plan; this was because I had to work to a strict budget, \$3-4,000 per student for France and Germany. For me, legislation that prevented me from sharing a room with students was very costly (although I understand why it was necessary). I used to use the mije, a glamorous hostel, and rotate through the rooms sharing a different room each night: a single room in Paris does not come cheaply. Often burdens fall on the same person; no-one else wants to/is prepared to take responsibility, especially for "holiday" activities and paying, not paid. Tour companies charge about \$1,000 extra per student for a 3 week trip and this means that 20% of the group will not go.

Often I have found teachers in other areas dismissive of languages t and l. The general idea seems to be that there are fewer students overall, but many teachers (and principals) do not take account of the hard work that many languages teachers do just to keep their subject going. They also "forget" all those Year 7 and 8 classes that need to be taught and in Euro languages the need to get students fluent enough to compete with background speakers. The Commonwealth funding for overseas trips (SLSOC) was very welcome and encouraged students to take the subject and do well in it for the HSC; all of mine loved the study travel and quite a few of them went on to study and work overseas

✍ 19 In NSW, articulation from high schools to universities has been worked out where students with HSC language, e.g., French, can come in to intermediate French courses in a university. Each university appears to have its placement system accommodating individual cases of diverse students.

The remaining issue is the unsolved articulation from primary to secondary. For example, my daughter had a choice of Italian or Chinese for background speakers in her first primary school starting at Year 3. Given that she is not a Chinese background speaker, she was allocated Italian and studied it for Year 3 and 4. Then she moved school. The new primary school taught LOTE only in Year 5 and 6. My daughter studied beginners Italian again in Year 5 and 6. Although the two primary schools were in the vicinity of our residence and they feed into the same high schools, their systems were not in sync. The high school my daughter entered did not teach Italian, even though the two feeder primary schools which my daughter had been to taught Italian.

It is a waste of a lot of resources.

On quality of Italian teaching, the first teacher of my daughter appeared to provide stimulating experiences, but the second teacher was more concerned about classroom discipline than student learning. After two sets of two years of beginning Italian, my daughter does not remember anything other than short self introduction.

Appendix 2C – NORTHERN TERRITORY

Northern Territory Parents said

✍ 1 I think in our town it can be strengthened greatly, the primary school has a exchange teacher every year which is great, but every year the teacher teachers the same as what was taught the year before, so the kids never really learn much and the high school has no language teacher/lessons at all, so what ever little skills was learnt at primary school can not be improved upon any way at high school, so it is really disappointing

✍ 2 Hello, My name is (name supplied) and I am very concerned by the lack of interest by teachers at my children's primary school. Whilst supported by the relatively new principal. Teachers that have been at the school for several years have let the teaching of Languages drop out of the curriculum focus. I have three children at the school and have just finished my teaching probation, not having a permanent position at the school. When raising the issue as a concerned parent, comments were said like, that the work load on teachers is already enough, oh! a couple of years ago we used to have someone's mum in to teach at the school, or but that teacher has left now that was interested in teaching languages. As a teacher (on Probation) I have started basic Indonesian Language/Cultural lessons, which the students have enjoyed immensely. I have found resources very time consuming to collect, the school had a language program Books/video/tape etc that was poorly maintained, missing tapes etc and had not been used as a whole school program (Indonesian) since around 1994-5. I believe if resources were more user friendly and available without eating into the limited funds already available, ie CD-Rom etc, more teachers would use them. If the Comm. Terr. Govts allocated real funding not token funding to encouraging Australians to learn Languages, this would be seen across more public schools. Whilst I think Indonesian is a good language to learn, as they are our neighbours, on the World stage Languages such as Chinese, Indian, French and Italian/Spanish are probably more useful and widely spoken. How many politicians in Australia are bi/multi lingual, that sends a very loud message to all Australians. In truth Australian Public School are very poorly funded for not only Languages but also other core subjects. Private Education seems to be doing very well in this area and I think the politicians, who the majority of public servants and ministers have had Private education believe that a problem doesn't exist.
Thank-you for conducting the Survey as I support any efforts to improve educational opportunities for all Australian children and adults.

✍ 3 I believe that it should be like religion, where parents and student decide. If a student in Yr 11 or 12 would like to study a language then it should be chosen as one of their core subjects as I do believe that we need to ensure English and Mathematics are our priority, and in this day and age most students are struggling.

The schools need to reduce the amount of subjects, Primary Schools - English, maths, science, social studies (SOSE), PE & health. Then in Yr 7 - 10 bring in the electives, one each term and in Yr 11 & 12 the choice of electives should be broadened. This way students can have the same amount of subjects, direct their career interest and concentrate on achieving highly in them.

NT Language Teachers said

 **1** I welcome the interest from parent organisations around Australia in what see clearly as a crisis time for Languages learning in Australian schools.

It's now 2006. There have been major concerns from government and educators now for at least 15 years re the state of Languages education in Australian schools.

By 2005, all Australian students were going to be learning a language till year 10. This didn't happen, and it was obvious before the year 2000 it wasn't going to.

Of course monolingualism is holding back Australia in its efforts to be a global citizen and corporate player.

Suddenly focussing on Chinese and Hindi as the economically imperative languages of business and international relationships is likely to be as effective as the big rush to Japanese in the 1990's. It's far too late, when we need interculturally competent young people right now in 2006 across the broad spectrum of government, business, education and international relationships.

Raising Australian young people to have high levels of operating comfortably in intercultural situations demands that they are exposed to quality teaching and learning of other languages at young ages. In this context all languages are of equal value; as language learners what is important is that they are given the opportunity through learning a language to explore their feelings, preconceptions and cultural stances towards other cultures, beliefs and understandings.


The hardest choice for Australians is deciding which language/s. Australian Indigenous languages need to be considered as equally valid, alongside Asian and European languages.

The greatest challenge for schools is finding well trained language teachers who are fully cognisant of intercultural language learning methodology. Background speakers often struggle to provide teaching and learning beyond language, grammar and culture. Similarly, some non-background speakers may struggle with the subtleties of intercultural language learning methodology.

The greatest challenge for government is to start doing something and grow it. Australia cannot afford inertia regarding Languages learning.


 **2** [Languages in the NT don't always run smoothly.](#)

Getting teachers up here is very difficult.
There is NO connection with languages between Primary and Secondary schools. Many students don't have to study a language.
I do get support from my school, but I also work VERY VERY hard to get that support.
I think languages should be compulsory for all year 1-9 students.
(Contact details supplied)


 3 At Darwin High we offer 7 languages.

Unfortunately due to the implementation of middle schools this range will gradually be reduced.

Things at present are good. Languages get equal time allocation in Year 8 and year 9. In year 10 it is optional.

 4 A lot of the above issues I find difficult to answer due to my situation. I am a Darwin based teacher, who previously taught Japanese in Melbourne. There are no resources available up here and there is little or no money available due to the lack of language teachers here. However I was fortunate enough to earn a trip to Japan earlier this year to help with my Japanese language

I feel my principal is supportive of the language program I offer, but I don't want to offer it to the whole school, just my class

 5 At PHS there are a high number of low literacy students. These children rely on listening and speaking skills to try and compensate for a lack of literacy. Language learning can therefore put them at an advantage in a class with mainstream children. However, I don't believe in mixed ability learning with too much extreme; I think it creates impossible demands on a teacher. I have had great success with many (not all) low literate children because I teach in a more visual way and use pictures to a large extent. The British GCSE caters for this section of the class very well.

Children who are determined not to enjoy languages are best not forced to learn but many students will "go along with it" if it is compulsory without much complaint and benefiting from the experience.

It is hard for me to comment at times on the broader Australian picture as I was brought up and trained in England. Also, some questions don't contextually match the socio-economic environment of the school: behaviour issues are a major factor in my school across the whole school.

I don't think a language should be introduced in year 9. Years 7 and 8 are fine. Year 10 introduction would work with highly motivated students.

SSABSA does not have a flexible approach to examining language. We should be assessing the level attained by students not comparing native speakers or long term language students with those who have studied for one term a year from year 8 to year 10.

NT Principals said

✍ 1 I believe learning a language can be an interesting and stimulating learning experience. Lack of qualified teachers is always the problem. Primary school classroom teachers have been expected to deliver a program in a language they know nothing about with very few supportive resources (In my case it was Indonesian and Italian). This becomes a frustrating and poor quality experience for all.

✍ 2 Our ties to Asia are important in the selection of choice of languages. However, we need to continue ties to Europe, so I don't think one should be to the detriment of the other. Probably students should have GOOD exposure to a language of both regions.

What we need is more co-ordination between centres of education at all levels... preschools should have a LOTE component as well as all universities.

I am shocked that you could exclude Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages from this survey (I am currently teacher/principal in a small remote Aboriginal school). Government at all levels is "mainstreaming" ATSI affairs and here is an excellent opportunity to include in a proactive manner and you are excluding. It is shameful that ATSI languages are hopelessly UNDERFUNDED and ignored by the wider community and all levels of government... you'll excuse my passion, but it is difficult to understand why ATSI languages could possibly be excluded from this survey.

I am a language teacher and I continue this here on the community, not as a subject, but just because the Aboriginal kids (who speak 2 or 3 languages BEFORE English, are excellent language learners and enjoy picking up a 4th or 5th LOTE that is from Europe... with the number of tourists coming through the centre, this will stand them in good stead

(Contact details supplied)

NT Language Advisors said

✍ 1 Language in schools can be strengthened if Government Education administrators showed a real interest in the languages teaching. Currently in the Northern Territory language teaching is primarily conducted with great dedication and diligence by a small number of teachers.

Even though Languages is one of the core disciplines of education the back up of facilities and resources given to this area of education is sadly missing. This appears to be because the administrators only give lip service to the importance of language and fail to see how the knowledge of another language leads to the knowledge of other cultures, history and geography which in turn provides students with a broader education to cope with the global world they live in and will eventually work in.

This is disappointing especially as the Northern Territory is a thriving multi cultural community with a strong requirement to maintain their history at the same time assimilating into the Australian culture.

✍ 2 The NT is currently reviewing languages delivery in schools after an extensive research into languages education in the NT. Jim Dellit was the consultant. He made 7 recommendations to improve languages in NT schools which the NT is current in the process of addressing. Languages Ed in the NT is an area that has been recognised as needing to be addressed. The positive is that this is happening - the negative of course is that it takes time. Languages is also the only area currently to have a curriculum manager specifically dedicated to one learning area.

Appendix 2D – QUEENSLAND

Queensland Parents said

✍ 1 Languages Education began to die in the 1960s when they were no longer deemed to be a pre-requisite for university entrance. They reappeared on government agendas only in the late 1980s when the ethnic schools program was dismantled and funding (albeit small in quantum) was redirected to school jurisdictional authorities. The NALSAS program arose for the wrong reasons (tied to political and economic only understandings of globalisation) and therefore was never going to be sustainable. In addition, the wider community has seen that the presumed outcomes did not eventuate for most students.

Furthermore, historically, the reality is that government recurrent funding assumes 7 key learning areas. When Languages emerged onto the agenda (including in the National Goals for Schooling - the Adelaide, and now Hobart, Declarations), this was in reality an addition of a new Key Learning Area (since it had been effectively non-existent since the 1960s). Recurrent funding should have increased by approximately one-eighth if governments were really serious about it, instead of a targeted program that assumed authorities already had the staffing and related infrastructure in place. They didn't. This is still a main element of the necessary agenda - not token national level projects that ensure money does not get to schools to enact the priorities.

Governments are rolling in money via the GST. They ought to get serious and direct some of it to support thorough educational provision in this area, to match the other KLAs. Of course other things need to happen too, and some of the current projects address this, but they cannot succeed without the concerted bottom line level of funding needed.

In terms of purposes, languages and cultures studies are a vital domain of study if we are to grow beyond the current world (and local) climate of policies and perspectives which are encouraging us to "fear the different". We must have our children understand others if they are to dialogue with them, learn from them, learn with them, share wisdom and experience with them. THIS IS THE PATH TO BEAT TERRORISM. IT IS ALSO THE PATH THAT NEEDS TO INFORM DEVELOPMENT, HUMAN EFFORTS TO ADDRESS POVERTY AND THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS OF THE UNITED NATIONS ETC. THIS IS THE LEARNING AREA WHERE WE CAN ENCOURAGE OUR YOUNG TO "KNOW THE OTHER", "BE AT ONE WITH THE OTHER" IN SOLIDARITY. THIS IS WHAT COMMUNITY MEANS, WHETHER LOCAL OR GLOBAL. OUR POLITICIANS HAVE NOT LEARNT THIS YET. WHO IS MY NEIGHBOUR?

✍ 2 It should be treated as one of the key learning areas but is downgraded in most schools. There appears to be a lack of qualified language teachers in the system.

Governments do not see it as important hence there is general apathy about the benefits.

✍ 3 I find it difficult to understand why our school cluster teaches a European language (German) rather than an Asian language. The High school claims that it teaches German because all the feeder schools teach it. The feeder schools claim that they have to teach German because the High school teaches it. The High school has a sister school relationship with a Japanese school. I feel that the real reason is that the Education Department finds it easier and cheaper to employ teachers who can speak a European language rather than recruit and train Asian speaking teachers.

✍ 4 My son (Year 7 primary school) has learned Japanese for 7 years. He is quite open and interested in other languages but is not currently enjoying his language learning experiences. I think his teacher is quite competent in working with the students and presents a satisfactory program. So from my parent perspective, it is perhaps the delivery of the program (ie the pedagogy) which may be demotivating.

We have German heritage and so he is looking forward to learning German in high school - I hope the same thing doesn't happen again!

I am also a languages educator although I haven't taught German for 5 years now. I believe that the Australian society does not value the use of Languages Other than English. It is an implicit (ie hidden) message that is delivered constantly through media and everyday conversation. It is an inherited value from that part of our past that is colonial English. Perhaps one way we can increase the value attached to being able to speak another language is to highlight the second language speaking abilities of people in our community, eg MPs, community leaders, sports people and how a second language enriches their working and everyday lives.

Secondary school teachers often report turn around attitudes of students who travel as an exchange student. They experience the relevance of the second language in a current context. Perhaps \$500 or \$1000 scholarships could be offered to Year 10 students Australia wide to participate in a minimum one month exchange and at the same time (perhaps in Year 11) establish work experience links to organisations in Australia (non-government and government departments) to see how a second language can be a valuable additional skill set to an organisation.


✍ 5 IMMERSION IMMERSION IMMERSION!!! Is the way to keep languages alive in Australia.

As a parent but also as a teacher of LOTE and a LOTE program coordinator I feel that in Qld LOTE is of little importance within the Qld school curriculum. I am from a non English speaking background and at home we speak three languages. I can certainly say that my children have found the study of a LOTE language in high school facilitated due to their knowledge of a European language at home. I can further say that although they enjoyed their time with an Asia language in primary school they chose not to continue with an Asian language in high school because it became too complex, this leading to a problem of continuity. Continuity I feel is a big problem in Qld, some children are lucky enough to study certain European languages in primary school but when they get to high school many schools limit themselves to only two LOTE's (Japanese or French) this leaving students who have studied either other European languages (German, Italian, Spanish) with no opportunity to continue their studies, unless they attend very costly private schools. There should be a wider variety of languages offered to students and I believe if schools truly believed in language programs they would offer the variety but because in many schools across Qld LOTE is only seen as an opportunity to give main stream teachers their non contact time, children are left to be culturally and socially disadvantaged. Simply teaching children about different cultures is not enough, language is such a huge part of culture that you cannot truly teach culture unless you teach language. I would be more than happy to speak to you
(Contact details supplied)

✍ 6 I would like to see Australian Indigenous languages in the school curriculum - any language program requires adequate levels of staffing/resourcing.


✍ 7 Second language learning needs to be valued by Australian society. High profile community members from all walks of life who have second language skills need to promote their second language skills. There should be more opportunities for students to engage in immersion programs. Students and families should be assisted with the cost of exchanges (with strict guidelines - eg one month minimum stay, school attendance/language course attendance,, and subsequent enrolment in language study upon return


to Australia) this assistance could take the form of scholarships and perhaps tax deductions.
(Contact details supplied)

 **8** As long as my son is happy at school, then I am happy with his progress.

As a traveller, my young son has already experienced the joy of travelling overseas and the benefits of understanding another language.

LOTE studies are a very real life experience for him.


 **9** I believe that studying cultures is even more important than studying languages, as cultural mores vary to such a degree that we could seriously offend someone by not knowing these differences. The concentration on languages, with little interest in culture makes for a dry subject, of little interest to many students. Particularly in the case of the Asian studies which is to be thrust upon us, rather than students being forced to learn Chinese at one school, Indonesian at another, etc, Asian cultural studies, encompassing the whole area could be the subject, with students learning specific languages using computer-based programs, allowing for personal preference.


 **10** We are very fortunate in having our girls attend a school that has a well developed LOTE functionality (Chinese, Japanese, German, French - Indonesian under consideration) being a P-12 campus, Junior school access to resources and expertise that exist in the secondary school is well co-ordinated and our younger daughter (yr 2) has been exposed to all four languages on a rotating semester basis during prep, yr 1 and yr 2. Even this has qualified these children with the necessary - "yes, no, please, thank-you" that enables polite travel whilst significantly expanding their "view of the world".

Issues that seem to beset language teaching revolve around a failure (my opinion) to equip students with language rather than to "teach" them assessable components. This is perhaps the single most significant issue that should be considered in any curriculum review - Is it more important to be able to communicate - or be grammatically correct and accurate? This is of course further complicated when one considers languages that are less interpretive than those of Western Europe. Although there would be difficulties, it would seem that constructing course units with differing objectives for different languages would seem to be worthy of further consideration.

The great Yr 8 divide is another problem that it would seem most educators are in denial about. Many students who have studied LOTE in primary schools see their learning stall for up to 3 years because courses fail to recognise any form of prior learning or innovatively provide streaming or extension activities. Easy marks, distraction, and a big drop off at year 11 seem to be the outcome. In this day and age of real time world wide communication there would seem to be many opportunities for creatively dealing with this situation.

As you can see, I am somewhat passionate about this subject - to the point that our household hosts 2 (non paying) homestay exchange students. I would be happy to discuss any of these matters further and can be readily contacted. (Contact details supplied)

 **11** I believe more preference should be given to teaching a local Indigenous language as it appears that most schools do not even consider this an option

 **12** Q. 46: "My child finds the study of language stimulating" is difficult to answer when one of my children loved it and the other did not.

 **13** Both levels of government pay lip service to education anyway, and languages really suffer.

Howard managed to destroy much of what was left of the enthusiasm for languages after Keating gave it a kick start.

Primary school programmes here are a joke with a poorly trained Mandarin speaking Chinese nationals overwhelmed by Australian school standards and behaviours.

The parents here, Toowoomba, do not seem to value learning a language much, but maybe more support for German, with so many Lutherans lurking around the place.

As a result, foreign languages are not seen as relevant. Yet the ABS stats for here show that Mandarin has the highest percentage of speakers at home of any foreign language in this electorate....could it be all those Chinese takeaways?


It seems, having had two boys start in Y8 doing Mandarin after being in contact with it for all of their primary days...daze?...that the transition to high


school, coupled with 'brain development' changes makes LOTE a danger subject.


I'd prefer to see far more concentration early, from Y1 through, then maybe it would be wise not to compel LOTE in Y8&9, but still offer it to those that enjoy it, and provide a start up crash course for Y10-12 when the brain has 'settled down' a little.

I suspect though, that the 'battler' doesn't really care too much about LOTE anyway....that is a failure of government leadership, at both levels, to explain the relevance....to say nothing of the rest of our education system failing to ensure students are taught to be 'critical thinkers' at school...and then grow up to be able to manage a little critical thinking as an adult....schools seem to be deliberately designed to crush any enthusiasm for learning a child may have since they continue to be run along half factory - half prison guidelines, with the student the last person consulted about their needs.

And these days, with politicians fanning the fires of jingoism, and demanding immigrants to sign up to 'Aussie values' including speaking only English....it will be even harder to explain why LOTE is a worthwhile experience.


 **14** I have no doubt that studying a language (or languages) may be beneficial in many ways to those interested however I believe that the scope is far too narrow and offers little for an individual's ability/right to select a particular language depending on circumstance/s or preference. Whether or not languages other than English are beneficial is not important when the emphasis should be on preference, choice and individual need. A student will benefit far more if encouraged to make a choice and either include or discard languages study an focus on what is relevant to them in the subjects they will be most successful in.

 **15** The quality of the teacher is of paramount importance. My daughter was extremely fortunate to have excellent Indonesian teachers when she went through Gin Gin Primary and Secondary. I am a teacher-librarian at the High School and cannot say the same applies for our present students. Another difficulty has been that the HOD of English and Social Sciences was giving LOTE also. He did not support it to any great degree. At present, Year 8s have only one term of Indonesian and it is an elective in year 9. I would not call this satisfactory.


 **16** My two younger children (primary age) attend our local school, which is a P-10 in a small isolated country town in Qld. We are thrilled that they have been given the opportunity to learn Japanese, through the service of a


qualified teacher who travels a 400 km round trip each month to have a lesson with each class. On our "non-Sensae" days, the children communicate with her via teleconference.


We are impressed that our children have access to such a high standard of language education, when distance and isolation can so easily result in missing out on important opportunities.


 **17** I am a strong advocate of funding for all primary students - preschool/prep to year 7 to receive instruction in LOTE.

This I support as a parent and as a LOTE teacher.
(Contact details supplied)

 **18** Language Other Than English (LOTE) is only used as one of the Class Teacher Release- from-face-to-face teaching options. Therefore it is only studied once a week and is often interrupted. It is not thought of in great regard. No student can successfully learn a language on one lesson a week - max possibility of 40 hours a year. Therefore the lessons are often unsuccessful and the students are frustrated. Our teacher is not really qualified, and barely speaks the language themselves; she is only 1 lesson ahead of the children as she goes to French lessons at night herself! It's rather ridiculous. Reporting can be difficult for these specialist teachers as they see so many students so rarely - these specialist teachers (11 specialist teachers) need great support.

 **19** Since my child is only in pre-school, going on grade one next year at St. Flannan's. I do not know a great deal about the language program yet, hence, some of answers provided above as ' Don't Know'.
Overall, I believe languages should be offered throughout the school system, however, students who have problems with everyday English, like spelling and vocabulary should be helped in these areas first; more focus should be placed on the usage of the everyday English language.

 **20** We need more qualified language teachers to improve the quality of programs offered.

 **21** Language should be compulsory at least until year 10 in every school and students who wish should have the option of studying two languages.

✍ 22 The emphasis on eight KLA has led to a decreased emphasis on what should be core- ELA, SOSE, Science and Maths. The other four should be enrichment and elective only. A three month post secondary intensive language study will achieve the same goals as the current practice is achieving with study from 4-10! All of my children learned very little despite the fact that the schools they attended provided real support in terms of time, resources and quality teaching. They studied the same vocabulary year after year. LOTE should be an elective.

✍ 23 Our school has the same language from Year 1 to Year 7 with two half hour classes a week. This is a perfect portion of school time and the consistency is evident through the years. The teacher is committed and from the country of origin of the language and is a fulltime staff member. Other schools can learn from our programme.

✍ 24 I would like to see the kids learning more vocabulary so they can use the language more with the study of the culture built in. I think that perhaps there is more focus on the country and culture of the language than the language itself and I think the kids are capable of learning to put together sentences and should have a goal of a certain level of fluency for each year level.

✍ 25 My children are in grades 3 and 1. Neither can access a language program at their school until grade 4. They will do French then. Our school is very multicultural and all families value this highly. There wouldn't be many families at the school who are French. There are many Greek children who also go to a separate Greek school (to learn language and other things) and perhaps this would be more relevant for our school. Many children come to the school who cannot speak English at all (as new arrivals/refugees). Our school also has a SEU. As one child cannot talk (she can hear) my son's grade 3 class has spent a bit of time learning sign language. All of the children have enjoyed this immensely and are very competent. I believe it was made better in that it was seen as something useful to learn given that it increased their ability to communicate with that child with special needs.

I would like to see the younger children have access to learning languages. I would prefer, especially at a younger age, for my children to learn about a range of languages and their sounds and the associated cultures and their belief systems as a package - with a focus to not necessarily becoming particularly fluent in the language but more knowledgeable in a number of cultures. Perhaps when older then the children can focus more specifically on a language that has taken their fancy at a younger level.

✍ 26 I question as to why "other teachers," especially Primary School Teachers were not able to be included in your survey.

I also question the "agenda" and purpose of this survey considering the type of questions being asked.

I have been involved in LOTE in primary schools since it first began and have found that most assessment has come from within its own faculty. For example, when LOTE was first introduced into Queensland and then assessed after the first year, the only people asked to assess the program was the LOTE teachers themselves. The majority of Primary School teachers were extremely unhappy with the introduction of LOTE and the manner in how it was introduced.

LOTE was introduced into Queensland school to help our children get jobs in the tourist industry. This is not the case. LOTE was also introduced into year 6, follow these children through their high school years, and was also promised to go down to a year, one year at a time. This never happened. In fact cut backs were introduced.

Anyone who knows anything about language acquisition knows that it should begin in Pre School and follow the child throughout school life. LOTE in Queensland Primary Schools is a peace-meal curriculum. The majority of children hate LOTE, which is reflected in the behaviour problems in LOTE classrooms through most schools. Many primary teachers also believe that if you are not going to teach language in the manner in which is recommend, then the money spent on LOTE could be better spent reinforcing English acquisition.


✍ 27 Speaking from the perspective of a small bush one teacher primary school - I am thrilled the children have access to study of a language. However, the attitude of the principal is felt through the school. Our previous principal felt it an unnecessary intrusion to have the language teacher come in and this made it hard for the students to generate enthusiasm. The new principal's attitude is better but often the phone in sessions clash with something interesting which the kids have to miss out on and that leads to resentment on their part. Perhaps if the principals were instructed on the benefits of the language education they would value it more.


As immigrants to Australia (English speaking) we find the education very much "Australia orientated" and feel a language is very beneficial in letting the students have access to the bigger world.


For the students to have an opportunity to spend time with native speakers of the language in the classroom would be extremely beneficial but not always possible. Possibly, exchange students could spend time at remote schools (primary school kids could benefit largely spending time with older foreign


children, especially in rural areas with little cultural diversity) and other schools learning their language.


There is a problem with continuity from primary to high school - especially in remote areas where the kids have to do whatever language there is a teacher for - they then go to boarding school and the school may not offer that language. If the senior schools actively support the interested children in pursuing their study through the distance education system this helps alleviate that problem to some extent.

 **28** One of the most disappointing aspects of learning a language is the continuity or the transition from primary to high school. We found that even though our daughter thrived learning French for three years during primary and was keen to continue at high school, it was not on offer at the school she is now attending. I know it is difficult to offer many languages at the one school, so I don't have a solution to this problem.

 **29** I would not like to give any more details, as I do not know enough about languages and how they are taught in schools whether teaching of language is successful or not successful. The schools do not give enough information to answer these questions?

 **30** So long as the education department dedicates itself to a quality program rather than a political stunt, the national plan may have a chance of success.

 **31** The study of Japanese in my son's primary school years is strengthened by the visiting of a group of Japanese students each year who are hosted with our families. We have also had wonderful language teachers who have inspired my son to want to continue to learn Japanese in High School.


 **32** My family believes very strongly in that learning another language is extremely important in many ways. Not only as a means to greater employment prospects, but also as a way of promoting greater understanding and tolerance of different cultures and creating a more 'global' mindset for our students.

Unfortunately, due to funding, class numbers etc. schools are not always in a position to offer students a specialist teacher of an acceptable standard in their chosen language of study. My own children (4) have experienced tuition from


teachers whose own language skills left a great deal to be desired (more than 1!)- especially in the presence of native speakers of that language.

I believe that if we wish to teach our students another language, the standards of knowledge and pronunciation of the teachers of the individual languages should be of a much higher standard so as to pass on those standards to our students.

Schools should also not be using teachers (however unwilling they may be) to instruct students in subjects that are not their 'specialty'. We have experienced teachers who, due to low class numbers, teach at least 2 to 3 different subjects - to justify their full time employment. Obviously, students in some of those subjects can not be receiving the expected standard of tuition.


 **33** A key issue to sustaining language programs is continuity across years. While the QLD Yr 5-8 compulsory idea with cluster school LOTE's seemed logical, the high transience rates meant that it was difficult to maintain continuity.

Primary LOTE seems to live in isolation - needs more integration with the mainstream teaching.

 **34** Indonesian is the language taught at my child's school. This has caused difficulty for some families leaving the school to find another school (in Kingaroy and elsewhere) that teaches this language. The other schools in Kingaroy to my knowledge do not teach this language. While core languages when I was at school were European - French and German - I think that the emphasis on Asian languages needs to be strengthened.

I have a strong interest in languages and firmly believe it to be one of the core skills that all students should be required to pursue. I acknowledge that it is challenging, but ultimately regarding in terms of cultural awareness/understanding, but also to better understand English and the mental agility that training in languages encourages.


(Contact details supplied)


 **35** I grew up outside Australia. My mother is Italian and my father, English. My parents sent me to a French school (from the age of 5) where I also learned German and Spanish, and I also began to study Portuguese at university (in France).

I feel that surely the best foundation of learning a new language is having the best qualified and motivated teachers. Although we have been in Australia less than two years, I do appreciate that there is a skills shortage; somehow, we have to get more languages taught earlier in schools, and yes, that means finding the teachers to do it.


It really is a vicious circle: in order to have young people interested in LOTE, we need to get them learning languages in primary school, so that they can then take over the mantle of LOTE teachers - but who is going to teach them in the first place?

I think we have to motivate people (teachers) from other countries to come over to Australia to teach our children their languages. Once you can speak another language, then the fear of spreading your wings and going to new countries is much less. You are also much more likely to take an interest in that country and what's happening in the rest of the world, and take your place in it with confidence.

 **36** Primary schools should offer 2 languages to children: an Asian language AND a European language. We may be in close proximity to Asia, but many of us also have relatives in Europe and plan to visit there someday. European children routinely learn 3 or 4 languages from early childhood. Why treat Australian children as incapable of doing the same? We are dumbing down the education system and it is a huge concern.


 **37** I would like to see evidence of a variety of teaching methods and activities within the language program in our primary school eg games in Chinese, role playing etc. Also that inter-cultural field trips should take place eg to Chinese events, and Chinese guests to visit. I would like to see the children coming home with worksheets / homework to practice Chinese, and be able to share with us what they have learned. So far that does not happen. Language seems to be on of those quick time slots in the week on the same level as sport, where they don't have homework or practice, as is sometimes the case with music or art.

Language should have the same work requirements, stimulating projects etc as the major areas of English, Maths, SOSE, history etc. (I speak from a primary school perspective).

 **38** I would like Italian or Spanish taught or offered in primary and high schools as these languages are spoken in many different regions.

My child is in grade one but doesn't start learning another language until grade 6. I think this is later than it should be and they should start in grade one or two.

 **39** I would like my child to learn LOTE but it is ONLY offered to students in Yrs 4-7. I think it should be offered from Year 1 to 7.


 **40** I gave some negative answers to questions related to primary school because my child's experience in primary school was very negative. This is more related to the poverty of primary school curricula in general (I strongly oppose a curriculum from grade 1 to 7 based on various versions of "cut + paste" - as a methodological basis for learning).

I think that primary school kids are smart and they should have the possibility to learn more content than what they currently do now.

Language suffered from the same problem. My daughter was studying French, which she dropped in high school to learn Italian (I am a native speaker). My daughter did not learn anything in French. If I compare this to the French I studied in Italy in the 1960s, and draw a general conclusion, I must say that Australia has a really bad track record in teaching languages in primary school.

The school my daughter attends currently is a premier state school in QLD, and I am generally satisfied about the school overall. The language course she attended in the first semester was very well organised, taught and delivered a lot of cultural content, as well as solid grammar basis.

I think that the study of European Language other than English helps enormously in understanding grammar and how to write, given that this is not taught in English curricula. (Contact details supplied)

 **41** I am a western Queensland born several generation Anglo Celt type of Australian who since leaving school has pursued the study of Japanese, Italian, Spanish and Greek.


(at school, I was badly taught bad French and bad Latin. I did badly)

At home we speak a LOTE as a family. I value very much the study of language as a personal growth opportunity first and foremost, secondly as a contribution to enhanced intercultural communication and understanding both locally and globally, and thirdly as skill development exercise to enhance the capacity of Australians individually and the nation as a whole to be able to participate and compete effectively in the global market place. (however reason one and two are far more important than this last)

The lack of resources and importance given to language study appalls me almost as much as the lack of imagination and skill with which it handled in the school.

How to enhance this? Clear commitment from the top down, strong value placed on language learning as a nation and community, strongly skilled and competent language teachers in well resourced programs (including immersion programs, exchange programs and programs to professionalise the teaching capacity of people from ethnic communities). Not fussed about Asian versus European languages, although I might soon embark on Chinese myself as I believe we probably all will need to acquire some skill there. All language learning is good per se. (even Latin)

(Contact details supplied)


 **42** Think it should be studies of other cultures, not just a focus on languages. Some children are interested in the culture - lifestyle, food, etc, & are more accepting of others when they learn how other people live in different parts of the world. Often all they get is languages only, which some can't cope with at all, thereby increasing their prejudice, and not making them more tolerant. This can be especially true if they have a native-speaking language teacher, who just expects them to understand the subtleties of different cultural nuance by osmosis, meaning the students are constantly in trouble in these classes, when they don't even know what they have done wrong.


 **43** I do feel that languages like German and French are a bit outdated.

I am both a parent and a staff member who runs the International Department at the school. It is often the parent's lack of knowledge that hinders an Australian child's progress in the learning of a language. If parents were given access to even simple word lists or weekly list of "what your child has learnt this week" this would encourage the parents of children especially in the lower grades to take an interest. In the higher grades it is often the direction of future career goals the limit the number of students studying languages in senior. Parent tell their children that the study of whatever language won't get the job and so the students are forced to drop the subject regardless of how well they are doing or how much they enjoy the subject.


If high schools could educate the parents to understand that there are opportunities that by having language skills will enhance their career paths.


It is also the amount of time given each week to languages that are a problem. More allotted periods would be good.

 **44** Perhaps there could be prizes or scholarships awarded for the language courses. They should be fun and interesting to the students and they should have regular opportunities to speak with other people who have a better grasp of the language. There should be an option for language immersion at more schools than there currently are.


 **45** As stated in the information above it is important to me for students to study languages from the region where most of our tourists are coming from. Our Parent and citizens group discuss languages, the main problem to change to Asian languages is that there are very few Asian language teachers available to teach those languages. I believe Chinese people will be our largest tour groups within a few years and we should be ready for the influx.

Unless students are interested in employment within the tourist industry, language can be a waste of valuable study time as they will probably never have to use it. In our region most tourists come with tourist companies and only go where they are taken and the general public have little chance to deal with them.


 **46** Our school has regular inbound & outbound exchanges which I think is extremely important for learning a language. It also enables cultural learning to take place which I feel is vital too. My son has benefited enormously from these programs - he ended up doing a term of schooling in Japan which really helped him with his speaking & listening skills. He also learnt so much living & experiencing the Japanese culture. I am a parent of a student but also a staff member at (Contact details supplied)

 **47** Whilst Asian countries are our nearby neighbours I think that through globalisation and technology we mix with a diverse range of cultures, not just the Asian cultures. I think that China and India will be the power forces in the future, just as Japan has been in the past, and I think it would be of great benefit if our children/students learn of the Chinese and Indian cultures and that the subjects of Cantonese or Mandarin are offered on Qld schools, particularly in the Bowen basin/coal mining region as many businesses in this area do business with China. Quite a number of schools in Perth offer these languages. French has always been a lovely language to learn, but

difficult for students to see any relevance to - as a country we do not have any strong ties to France.

 **48** My opinion is that learning a language involves more than just learning it in class. There has to be more practice outside of that class, i.e. either immersion in it in cultural exchange or having a language partner and just speaking the language to each other outside of the language class.

It is really important to learn a language other than English because although it is widely spoken, it is not the only language in the region and with the mass migration that is happening all the time, it helps to foster some understanding and tolerance towards other culture and hopefully bridge the differences between cultures.

 **49** I would strongly advocate greater emphasis on foreign language learning in schools at both the Primary School and Senior School Level. Having second (or third) language ability helps individuals understand intercultural issues, makes them better communicators both in environments where English is not the main language of choice, but also in English speaking work and social environments where just different styles of communication can lead to problems. It is fun for children; it broadens their exposure to other countries and cultures, and can be taught in ways that enriches their understanding of concepts learned through a standard English language curriculum.

If a love of language is instilled at early Primary school level, this interest can easily sustained through to the secondary and tertiary level. Research presented at the recent IDP Conference in Perth showed that Australian employers acknowledge the value of Australia's graduates having foreign language skills. And this kind of skill will become increasingly important as Australian businesses become more globally linked, requiring employees who can deal across cultures and national borders.


Language learning is also important when you think about the numbers of migrants from non-English speaking countries that live in our communities and attend our schools. Multiculturalism is in the fabric of our communities and our schools which often talk about valuing diversity. If we want our kids to be able to function well in this multicultural community, and to become better equipped for finding employment in an increasingly globalised world, then foreign language skills will be vital.


My child is at pre-school and does not yet receive language training at the School. I understand that this will happen in Year 4. But I would wish for his exposure to a second language to begin as soon as possible (even at pre-school) through programs that introduce speakers of different languages and


the introduction of songs and games from other countries. My son has had this kind of (informal) exposure through his daycare centre with trainee teachers who are international students from other countries. He has been extremely responsive to these teachers, learning simple words from their languages and talking about their countries and food etc both at daycare and at home. He has become very interested in the concept of diversity, which I think is extremely positive. I am trying to nurture his interest by giving him books and resources from the library and referring to different ways of calling things in different languages.


For further discussion I am happy to be contacted at:

(Contact details supplied)

 **50** There is so much more that could be done not only in learning a specific language but teaching children to communicate interculturally using the resources that sit in the classroom. I would like to see it at least one other language other than English integral to the curriculum from grade 1. This would assist in building better, more inclusive perceptions and add considerable weight to multiculturalism.

 **51** I think there is a place for Indigenous Australian languages to be taught in schools - while there may be difficulties in terms of resources (both material/human), I believe students would benefit from language awareness activities in Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander languages.


 **52** Robina High offers a fantastic languages program, I believe that there is always room for improvement; perhaps with more funding and resources this can be achieved! As an international host family I realise the importance of our children having the opportunity to study another language.


 **53** The only impediment my children had to learning languages was the teacher. They both had the same language teacher at primary school, from all reports was a cranky and unfriendly person. This then set their minds against learning a language. Once they got to high school and had the experience of another teacher they thrived but dropped the language as soon as they could as they still had a negative view towards it.


This particular teacher did the majority of language teaching at a very large primary school. I always just guessed that the school kept her because they couldn't get anyone else and she was enthusiastic and organised. She just wasn't good with kids.


Training quality and quantity of teachers for any subject area would have to be well supported before improvements or major changes could be made to any curriculum area.


Please note, this is not to suggest that I support merit-based strategies for teacher recruitment - quite the opposite.

 **54** Teacher education and resourcing needs more attention and support. Languages taught in Primary schools need to be resourced so that very young children can have the opportunity to learn other languages in a fun and informal way. This may mean that interest is higher at a later age when these options are offered more formally. Community languages should have priority over other languages. Ethnic makeup of communities may influence the languages offered in the local schools so the tolerance and understanding of others within the local community is fostered and encouraged. In centres with groups of people who can and have spoken other languages, schools should be encouraged and supported to include these people within the language program.

 **55** Students that are having trouble with English and Maths should be doing reading recovery or things similar to that than another language. Because when they are made to do LOTE all they do is disrupt the class because they see no point in the class. They have enough difficulties in normal classes than have to be frustrated in LOTE. I have first hand knowledge of this as I have been a LOTE teacher aide in a small western school. It is so frustrating for the students as well as the teachers.

 **56** Languages need to be taught from prep, not from year 5. The earlier the better. Asian languages are often taught by native speaking Asians, and there are some problems with respect not shown to them, and their different expectations and experiences of how students should behave in class.

 **57** If language is to be taught in schools then it needs to start at preschool level. The language being taught also needs to be one that child hear and read around their community.

 **58** Becoming fluent in another language is a blessing when visiting that country - it allows closer cultural contact. It may also help the understanding of our own amazing conglomerate language - English, when the new language is Latin, Greek, Italian, German, French, Spanish etc. I am forever

going back to the roots I learned at Primary school to help my kids understand and use words correctly in their own language - English.


 **59** I think there are a number of issues:


* The start is far too late in most cases - research would seem to say that second language learning should start before adolescence - early primary or preschool would be better.

* The time allocated to Language is often non-contact time for homeroom teachers - this cements its separateness - there seem to be little continuity between LOTE and literacy more generally.

* There would also appear to be an antipathy towards language learning amongst other school staff, including administration - possible could be overcome with some strong advocacy from the committed (and there are lots of those as well)

* The message from government, with funding cuts etc is that language learning is not a high priority - one would think after the Cronulla riots etc that language learning with the knowledge and embracing of cultures that this can bring about that this would be a high priority.

 **60** I believe that if primary schools are to have a language program then there has to be continuity through the school year. ie something that is studied every term, not say 1st term then again in 3rd term. Also in our school we will have situations, particularly in the lower grades when children come from NESB who are having difficulty with English as well as their home language. These children should not then have struggle through learning a third language.

 **61** Language, like music should be an imbedded part of school life. Training should start at an early age and as there are many migrants in the country links should be made with migrant support groups to encourage and support Australian citizens or residents who speak a second language to become involved in the delivery of language education where possible.

There are so many opportunities for people who speak a second language in the global economy that we are failing our children if we do not offer them a chance to learn

✍ 62 As an Australian, I do believe we should have the choice of which language to learn.

I personally would pick Italian as my children's father is of Italian descent and it would be invaluable to their origin to learn such a language. I don't think they should be forced to learn an Asian language.

Thanks for your time

✍ 63 I believe that the younger a child is when they commence learning another language the better - they are able to learn English and another language or languages simultaneously as is the case in bi-lingual households. Given the opportunity I would encourage my children to study other languages and to be immersed to enable them to really understand the depth of the language. In my belief, being able to speak the language is far more important than knowing exactly how to conjugate a verb. Certainly in primary school the most important thing is to bring the joy of languages to the children and this can be achieved through speech as this is the most entertaining form of language. Language labs and visits by people who can converse with the children in another language are the key to encouraging and interest in the continuation of language studies in the future.

(Contact details supplied)

✍ 64 There has been a noticeable lack of continuity between the LOTE available in primary school and what is then available in high school. This is not a short term issue and reflects a lack of adequate resource allocation on the part of the State Govt in planning and structuring LOTE service delivery. Also, choices are restrictive and not always relevant to families where there is often a European heritage other than German/French eg Italian would have been the choice of language for my children, which if it had been available would have been a subject they carried through to Yr 12, rather than omitting a language after Yr 8.

✍ 65 We currently have an excellent Japanese teacher at our state primary school. However when my eldest child was there we had a year when we had 4 different teachers that were all equally appalling - the kids learnt zip that year and it was a complete waste of time.

In my eldest's private high school there are still issues with the French teacher also having to double up as a Japanese teacher - not her forte. My child is counting down the days until he doesn't have to do Japanese anymore! Consequently I believe that good language teachers are thin on the ground. This makes it hard - especially in a state school where you get what you are given.

✍ 66 I am happy with my daughter's language learning in her Catholic high school college, however she is extremely well motivated to learn Japanese which helps, of course. On the other hand, I think languages receive less than adequate support in my son's Catholic primary school. I would like to see more emphasis on learning a second language other than English at primary school with more interaction with the taught languages native speakers (if at all possible).

✍ 67 A shortage of teachers in some languages means that replacement teachers are hard to find in cases of illness. This can have a big impact when there is extended leave involved.

Parents of students with learning difficulties should be given as much information about the benefits of taking part in LOTE before making a choice about what is best for their child. In some circumstances these children might benefit from extra time with a specialist teacher or tutor

✍ 68 My Year 5 daughter loves her Japanese Language lessons and constantly comes home showing us how she can speak Japanese. I feel it is another facet of their learning experience and one which can be used throughout their adult life. Children require many forms of learning to allow them to improve their confidence in themselves as they prepare for High School. Japanese offers those students who may not excel in other subjects to do well in a language. After traveling myself, I feel it is essential for children to learn about their world. Languages in schools allow them to do this. Having a wonderful Japanese teacher is also beneficial.

✍ 69 More languages could be accommodated in schools if individual computer-based training courses were made available with teachers acting as learning facilitators and native speakers making periodic visits to assess progress.

✍ 70 My oldest child is in year 5 and so hasn't been exposed to the school's language program. This starts in year 6. I believe that the school has just lost their Indonesian teacher for the second year in a row and have to fill the position. I'm not sure how they are going with this.


I believe that exposing children to different languages is better from an early age.


✍ 71 I am frustrated beyond belief that the Japanese language teaching that was going on in my kids' school was dropped because the teacher left. I feel that the school took advantage of the teacher leaving to save money by not offering language any more. Parents were not consulted. There are no Languages taught from P-12 and I am very upset about this as I believe strongly in the cognitive as well as cultural benefits of learning languages other than your mother tongue. It builds tolerance and understanding and we can't have too much of that in our fractured world. I would take my kids to another school except this school is great in every other way!


I would like to see legislation enforcing the study of Languages so that slack principals can't get out of it. The problem is that there is probably a shortage of teachers so enforcement may be unrealistic. My dream is to see more opportunities for immersion in languages. I think there is a need for parent education as a lot of English speaking Australian parents are ignorant of the benefits of fluency in another language.


(Contact details supplied)

Queensland Students said

 **1** It is important to learn a language, however the carryover from primary school to high school, or from the state to private system usually involves a change in the languages offered. There is also almost no support (ie teachers) for languages such as Chinese (Mandarin), Middle-Eastern, or African languages.

 **2** In terms of language difficulty, I do not believe that anything is "too" hard, but I think that in order to succeed at a language you really have to have a passion about it. It is only in senior years (ie 11 and 12) that subjects become better, because there are only the students who actually want to do it in the classes. I do not believe that languages should be made compulsory, because the students who don't care can pull the other students back. However, in saying that, I do not believe that a student should feel like it is too late to join a language class - the classes should be judged more on one's progression in a language as opposed to just pushing everyone up with the grade. For example a student in year 9 who wants to start a language, but is concerned that they have missed a whole year (ie year 8) and has missed too much. This student would be comforted to know that he/she could join a class who would be at the same level. I understand that this could be difficult in terms of staff and resources, but it could be a possible solution. This probably couldn't work in senior either, because the assessment is all standardised, but in 8-10 it might be helpful.


 **3** While I believe that the teaching of languages is great at my school, I think generally the use of student exchanges to learn languages should be promoted more in schools. This is one of the best ways to become fluent in a language and aids further learning in the school environment.


 **4** To whom it may concern,
I would like to say that most languages you can learn will help you and most certainly be an asset to your future career in any field.


There is the problem that students under appreciate the power one gains from learning more than one language. Being in Australia we learn English as our primary language but it can be more complicated than others like Japanese which has no plurals or Italian which is written in English but can be connected to English and Spanish and is built from Latin. All languages help but forcing someone to do one would be an offence against human rights if someone doesn't wish to learn there are two reasons why, they genuinely don't want to because of something in there life or someone else has


impressed them this is the same as them thinking they wont use it is an impression that could come from parents, brothers sometimes even celebrities


More control by the teachers should be considered but although people learn fast from copying in books it makes the language resentable - the main reason we learn languages is to communicate and everyone would like to talk not just write.


 5 I got put in a language that I didn't want to be in - I wanted to do Japanese but got put in Italian I think that Japanese is better for me because I want to work in tourism and be a zoologist.

 6 I personally think it's really fun learning a different language, but our class is usually disrupted by a lot of people because they don't want to learn anything different to what they all ready know.

 7 French is my weakest subject!

 8 French is not my best subject because I am not very good at it and its my weakest subject...

 9 I believe that we need more time for language lessons and language teachers need to have another teacher with them so the students don't "muck" up.

 10 I personally think that taking part in studying another language at school is important to most people; these people in particular are as follows:

1. students wanting to take part in any subjects such as 'tourism' in year 11 and 12.
2. if wanting to travel around the world or even to just One other country...
3. anyone interested in the future to be working in hospitality, travel agencies, even theme parks and many more..

By studying another language at school, you will find it easier to get into many jobs that may involve communicating or dealing with foreign people.

I don't think that all students should have to take part, but I believe that if you are someone who is thinking about doing something later on in life that may


have something to do with travel, hospitality, etc, then studying a language is one of the best subjects for you.


✍ **11** Put simply the methods teachers have been taught with which to teach languages is outdated and the teacher is usually only a person who is fluent in the language. Which means they use regular teaching methods to teach an irregular subject.


✍ **12** I have studied Japanese since I was in grade two at a Saturday morning school at the CQU. I enjoyed learning about this wonderful culture so much that I decided that I would join the C.L.I.P. program at Crescent Lagoon Primary School, that went on till grade eight where I graduated from C.L.I.P. and started high school Japanese. In C.L.I.P. I started off really shy since I moved schools to learn this great language. Learning Japanese taught me so much it gave me self confidence because we did small performances, speech competitions and also did fashion shows all in Japanese. In C.L.I.P. we only could speak Japanese no English was allowed, unfortunately from year three to year eight we started with sixteen people and in year eight we ended up with six students prepared to continue learning this language. When I went to high school I was so ahead of the other students I had to move my language skills a year above my grade at the moment I am in grade nine and doing year ten Japanese. One of the students (my friend) in grade nine started Japanese in year five and flunked it completely until she came to be in grade eight, she asked me to help her understand more about Japan and she ended up getting an B+!


She is now passing Japanese without any self doubt. Japanese will give me many things in the future as well as giving others many things by studying a language other than English. English after all is the hardest language so no one should have any trouble. With your question before about would it be difficult for those who struggle in English? No it wouldn't because they may be better at another language (I'm better at Japanese then English!). At the moment Japanese has given me the chance to go to Japan which I did last year, my parents supported me all the way (my mum was the one that introduced me to the world of Japanese after all!) I am hoping to go again this year, to earn the money. I am tutoring a girl in Japanese. So my language skills and many other young Aussies language skills will come in handy someday because it provides so many opportunities in tourism, trade, teaching, science, transportation, translating and much, much more. I hope you know that by learning a different language young Australians broaden their horizons, meaning that they are creating our future and so we should be creating more language opportunities for the younger students. Thank-you for reading


 13 I think Japanese is extremely well taught at my school


 14 I have lived in China and it was a great experience for me. I think the government should offer scholarships for student who excel in language because the need for people who know how to speak a variety of languages in high school

 15 I would like more lessons in this subject of Japanese as it is a very interesting subject


 16 The percentage of students in my class that are female is higher than that of male. I find learning a language other than English, an enjoyable experience. I am really fascinated in learning other people's culture, and how different it is from ours. I like having a small class, as it allows you to have more one on one talks with your teacher. I wouldn't recommend someone take up a language in the later years of high school unless they are prepared to work really hard and study every week.

 17 I think that we should learn another language from the beginning of primary school. That way in a few years we will be experts.

 18 I think that if the school regarded language studies as a more important subject it might improve the number of students willing to learn it, I think that my school would also benefit if more than one language was offered to be taught.

 19 Overall I think LOTE will help us later on in life and it is very important.

 20 I enjoy doing LOTE at my school. Some days it is a drag but I still enjoy it.

 21 I would just like to say that I'm very impressed with the way our language teacher explains French to our school. He makes it easier to understand EVERYTHING! He uses videos, scripts, tests, cd/tape etc. I think all schools should teach languages because it will help you in life.

✍ 22 I think that learning a language at my school is a benefit for high school because I would be ahead of some people and I might get a better job.

✍ 23 I believe that languages should have increased time allocated in the school timetable. This would be beneficial as we could learn more about the culture and have a better understanding of the language its self.

✍ 24 I think there should be languages taught in all schools that way if the student goes to another country later in life that they understand the countries culture and languages that they speak. So that way he or she doesn't offend that countries culture and language in anyway possible.

✍ 25 You do not have to learn other languages if students do not want to!!! It is up to them what they want to do with their life!!! Not the teachers!! But that is for them to make when they get into year 9!!!


✍ 26 I feel that our school is great and that our school should stay the same way. I am proud of our school and I think that it is a magnificent school and I respect all our language teachers because I love my French but I do find it DIFFICULT to concentrate when my LOTE teacher is always yelling at the students that are always misbehaving. It will help me later in life if I want to become a language teacher. Thank you for your time

✍ 27 My teacher for French is way too strict. I wish he was nicer

✍ 28 I think that our language classes should be a little bit more fun and interesting. A lot of the children in the class hardly want to do anything. I on the other hand, love it only because I am interested in learning languages other than English. I am half Japanese and think learning other languages is vital for all Australian kids.

✍ 29 I believe that languages are suffering with today's students because of other influences from other subjects, such as students seem to think that languages are "less appealing" than other subjects being taught. Also there is a lack of students wanting a "hunger for knowledge" to learn about other cultures. This could possibly be due to students being un-informed about the

possibilities languages opens up for future careers or because they haven't been introduced to/taught language at an earlier stage in their education. This is unfortunate because learning a language greatly helped my education and has opened up my mind and eyes to other cultures and ways of thinking and has also given me many job opportunities for when I finish school. Languages should be influenced to be taught more in schools as people who don't study a language are missing out on an amazing thing.


 **30** Hello, my name is (name supplied) and I am from Germany. I consider languages to be the gate to the world!! I have come here to Australia for exactly 1 year. Why? That's easy,...I wanted to learn something about another country and find out how difficult or easy it would be to get to know the Australian way of life. In Germany, I have been studying French and Spanish for 5 years now, and as these 2 subjects are not taught at this school I teach myself at home!!! I started studying English in 4th grade at the age of 9. Living in Germany has made me consider learning languages a matter of course, since Germany is surrounded by sooooo many other countries.

My mother comes from Slovenia and my dad from the border of Tadschikistan/Afghanistan, so neither of my parents have German or English as their mother tongue. I urge you to offer more languages like Japanese, Chinese, but most of all SPANISH, as these languages become more and more important!!!!!!!!!!!!

But I also think that Australian students could learn other languages better and faster if they had more to study and if the classes were stricter.

In Germany, we learn languages faster and a lot more consequently compared to here.

But never the less, it is a good thing that you do this survey!!

 **31`** Languages should seem more appealing in junior so that when students go into high school they automatically have in mind to do a language.

 **32** Who made this crap survey???????

SUGGESTIONS

Make it shorter

Stop re-wording the same question over and over again

Make it colourful

✍ 33 It would be more beneficial if the languages were run consecutively, without gaps in-between, as staggered learning is not remembered. If given the choice between German and French or sport and dance majority of younger students would rather be outside doing something fun compared to sitting in a boring classroom doing grammar. Perhaps learning a language could be partially compulsory. Also majority of younger students are shying away from the more intellectual subjects for example maths, chemistry and physics which, I think, are the more important subjects to be studying, to learn more entertaining subjects such as dance, drama and digital arts. Once these students finish school they will not be able do anything except dance and act but what use have we for a society that can sing and dance but cannot think? Languages in primary schools needs to be re-established as it lacks any point considering that majority of primary school language teachers cannot speak the language well. Grammar needs to be taught! It is essential for correct language skills and majority of students lack in correct grammar

✍ 34 Being able to speak more than once language is an awesome talent and all students should give it a go. The language program at our school could be strengthened by making languages seem more fun to learn.

✍ 35 I believe learning languages to be an integral part of any student's development and that without a doubt at least one language other than English should be compulsory for all students beginning when primary school is first begun. Personally, I learn French and German, and given the chance, would be highly interested in learning any other European languages available to me. At our school, we consider ourselves to be some of the luckiest in the state, on one point because we have the opportunity to learn French, German and Indonesian through direct teaching and any other language available over the portal of online learning. On a second point, we are incredibly lucky to have a Dutch couple each fluent in 4 languages and if required, able to teach these 4, and speak an additional 3. Languages are integral, for example, what is to say English will continue to be popular, especially with the way the Americans flaunt their power and proclaim themselves and English as superior. For example, take South America and many parts of Indonesia, if one were to speak English in these countries, many people would turn down their nose in disgust, and in Java, Indonesia, a lot of English speakers will not be served at shops because they are assumed to be American. Point: Languages are highly important.

✍ 36 A larger variety of languages should be taught in schools

✍ 37 Our school has a very large section of languages other than English, however some like Japanese and Maori are not taught, even though these are key languages, this is evident in many schools in the region. LOTE are definitely helpful in later life, even if you don't intend to go overseas later on.

Now, how could LOTE be strengthened in schools?
I believe that it would help if students were involved in the choice of what subjects they want in the school.

✍ 38 I think that the language teachers should be of that same background as the language they teach. This is because it helps with accurate pronunciation of words and accurate meanings/spelling etc

✍ 39 Making a language compulsory for students in junior and high school, would benefit families later in life, also you would benefit from it because it will help you to be socially acceptable in some cases. In a way it is also respectful to know at least a little bit of one language so that you can talk with the person who uses that language in everyday situations.

Teaching students to learn languages will also benefit them later in life when their children start to learn the language, they will be able to help that child along with their language skills and enable them to get higher grades.

✍ 40 I don't think that we students have to do another language because I am not good at English and I have to still have to learn French

✍ 41 I do not agree with the way French is taught in our school. I would rather do projects than watch a boring French videos every session!

✍ 42 I believe many students do not choose language because their choices are limited by compulsory subjects. At Smithfield grade 8 students must do a major in HPE (6 subjects), English (6 subjects), Math (6 subjects), Literacy (5 subjects and this should be taught in English) and science (5 subjects). They have to do a minor in SOSE (4 subjects). An ICT module, a TDE module, a Home Ec module, and three modules of the arts.

When I went through grade 8 there was no Literacy and the TDE and home ec modules were combined. I had more choices and was able to choose a language.

✍ 43 I think some of the questions were pointless and others repeated themselves.

However if compulsory language continued throughout a students school years, then I think that it is reasonable that they would gain a certain amount of proficiency in the language, which would greatly benefit them in later years.

✍ 44 I am concerned that children at my school do not enjoy LOTE. I like the way the LOTE teachers use different ways to teach us. e.g watching a film in a different language and following with a script which clearly states what the people are saying in the different language and in English.

✍ 45 I think that the LOTE teacher in my school explains everything really good. (He is a French teacher.)

✍ 46 I think that learning languages is so very important in Australia. I am half Japanese and I would enjoy it if I were learning that at school. I am most interested in the language that I learn, though.
Thank you for letting me participate in this survey. I feel that it lets me tell you how I feel.

✍ 47 The teaching is very good but sometimes it gets a bit boring and they need to make it more interesting or play a game about the language.

✍ 48 I like French, just not the teacher. We watch things and we don't understand what they is saying.

✍ 49 My school's French teacher puts up with a lot of bad behaviour but teaches really good I think I will use it in life sometime

✍ 50 I believe it is very important for school students to learn another language. We recently travelled to Malaysia because it I study Indonesian and it was very satisfying to be able to understand and talk to people of another country. This has influenced me to continue with learning another language and to keep doing it even after school so I can speak it fluently eventually. I

think taking students in higher grades over seas is a good idea to make them see how the language they learn can be put into use. Even though we were only there for eight days even by the end I think that I picked it up a lot.

✍ 51 Brisbane State High has a very good language program for Japanese

✍ 52 A larger variety of languages should be offered to students =)

✍ 53 I think that Brisbane State High School does a very good job in teaching students other languages. At the moment, the school offers 5 languages, and this satisfies the majority of the school, as everybody has the choice of what they want to learn. I think that you can't force a person to learn a language, but you can encourage them and help them to be the best when they do start learning.

✍ 54 I believe that learning a language in both primary and secondary school is of high importance. Learning a language both provides more opportunities for career paths, and gives students more confidence and more understanding of grammar and the English language. Learning a LOTE subject should be strongly encouraged to the youth of today as it is a valuable experience and subject.

✍ 55 I think learning another language should be optional at all schools

✍ 56 The teacher also has a great influence on your mark. For example, if you get a teacher that doesn't like you, they will give you a bad mark regardless of your performance as they did for me.

✍ 57 Having Language teachers of the nationality being taught would be a good bonus because of added accent and knowledge of the country in question

Queensland Language Teachers said

✍ 1 I didn't like question #123 too broad, I have no idea what other classes in other schools are like, I hate the stereotype that LOTE teachers cannot control their classes. I have yet to meet a LOTE teacher that has trouble with controlling their classes; I really have no idea where this stereotype came from.....

I teach on the Gold Coast so languages are still very important to the students esp. Japanese - which is the only LOTE available at this school. Being LOTE coordinator for the past 4 years I have steadily built the number of LOTE learning students up over the last few years. The problem I see for LOTE is competition from other subjects, the students have too many choices, esp. going from Yr 8 to Yr 9, and then from Yr 10 to senior. I lose so many students in the senior due to a clash with Biology or another subject that they must take for university etc.

I will look forward to reading the results of the survey.

(Contact details supplied)

✍ 2 Birkdale State School's Japanese curriculum, "More than Sushi" has been developed after conducting a comprehensive survey of students, teachers and parents. Hence, it meets students' interests and needs as well as challenges them to achieve positive outcomes through a variety of learning experiences.

There are opportunities for students from all areas of the school including SEU students and non-LOTE students to be involved in school activities of LOTE learning. Students invite non-LOTE students to a special event like Japan's "Children's Day", teach Origami craft with simple Japanese and talk to them about the event's cultural significance. Senior students become buddies to the younger grades, helping them create a Japan quiz using Powerpoint, to be presented on a Quiz Day to other students and parents. Through students' participation in these activities and their works, I have observed that students are not only learning a new language, but also developing an understanding and appreciation of the values of others. I believe these qualities are important in intercultural language learning, and should be further encouraged and developed in the future.

The "I do and I understand", and "More than Sushi" curriculum clearly states what cultural aspect/s, and therefore language function and words each term is to focus on. It provides information on when a teacher should re-visit a specific cultural/social event and how this can be utilized to help build up student proficiency. It also allows for adjustment and improvements according to students' nature and interest in the curriculum, by continuously

monitoring students' development (e.g. through observation in a class, assessment, feedback).

✍ 3 I have a lot of fun in my classroom but I feel that some students are already blocked because of external attitudes. Language at this point is compulsory in the college for grades 6, 7 for two lang. Asian and European. Then choose for a two year block one or the other in yr 8 and 9. As the German teacher I feel I get the 'rejects' of the students who don't want to study Japanese, which means I have a battle to convert their attitude... most of the time ok. We have had a change in admin this year so am waiting to see the new direction, but often the language time is compromised by time and class sizes to suit a budget... something that I have come from in a state school and regularly hear of from colleagues. When schools feel that they will be 'rewarded' (money grants etc) for having language students they are more likely to continue with them.
Hope this helps.

✍ 4 I do a lot of extra curricular which raises the profile of LOTE in our school community and SE QLD. I organise a high school Indonesian camp for all for SE QLD and Northern NSW and am the QLD Indonesian Co-ordinator for MLTAQ which is an excellent organisation for LOTE teachers of all languages.

I enjoy my job but am always busy trying to improve and promote LOTE and like all subjects - the students who want to continue it will and the students who don't want to continue it won't. We are also the only school to offer extension LOTE in QLD for both the private and secondary schools. We have two classes in grade 9 and 10 of both the "normal" curriculum and the extension curriculum.

5 The issue of language education in my state centres around the continuity of the programme, staffing and the number of hours dedicated to the study of languages.

There is a huge gap between Primary school and High school language programmes. It really comes down to the dedication of the teachers involved. Unfortunately there is a high turn over of language teachers at the feeder schools in my area hence an issue with continuity and enthusiasm from students as they enter their high school language programme.

Principals and schools look at the minimum number of hours required for LOTE study and base their timetabling around that rather than thinking of what will benefit the learners the most ie - a semester of LOTE rather than one year continuous LOTE study.

✍ 6 I believe that many Australian parents and their children fail to recognise that learning a second language is an important part of an all-round education as well as in the development of intercultural understanding and intellectual development.

The emphasis when making decisions about subject choices is too much on future job prospects, rather than on gaining the broad education and flexible intellect which allow young people to go in whatever directions they decide on later.

Languages themselves are not the sole entry into a field of employment, but they are a valuable adjunct to a portfolio of skills when applying for positions.

✍ 7 I believe that students need an immersion environment to appreciate and benefit from the language taught in the school. I also believe that one hour lesson a week is simply not enough to motivate and allow students to "grow" with the language. As I believe that languages help in understanding and learning better your own, I think that oriental written language may present some problems, at least at an early age. I see that many Australian students are in serious difficulty coming to grips with English. I think, and this of course is a generalisation, that parents are often involved in a negative way in school matters and their input is not supportive of the teachers. I believe in fact that there is a tendency to blame rather than to construct.

(Contact details supplied)

✍ 8 More funding needed - leadership emphasis in focussing on the importance of languages as well as other curriculum areas. This needs to be public and overt not just a document on files.


✍ 9 Maintaining a high PUBLIC profile in languages eg frequently reporting sporting and cultural events in the daily newspapers eg reserving one page eg weekend Courier Mail / Wednesday issue (TV programme day)...with WHAT'S NEW IN....
Showing photos of visitors from one of the LOTES, school exchanges. Student events, fetes, competitions, prizes, trips, business interests etc.
When the Courier Mail reported on LOTE and interviewed Principals of State Primary schools what stayed in my mind was the general negative attitude of these educators to languages. There are LOTE primary school teachers who do NOT have their own LOTE classroom (one teacher held some of her classes outside), who have to battle to get one, or who 'visit' a classroom 'owned' by a primary school teacher (no posters please!) and are regarded with almost suspicion. There are primary school teachers who have such a


narrow vision of the role of LOTE that they see the primary LOTE teacher as someone below their own aura.

Private schools appear to be far more positive - perhaps the parents themselves are more culturally educated as a result of their personal experience/work.

Which brings us to the question of quality of education. There are parents (myself included) who feel that while ideologically one (state) education is preferable, there is more care and quality education in general in private education. Perhaps you can ask the stirrers to leave rather than have to recycle.


(Contact details supplied)


 **10** Languages should be a core subject. It is disheartening to see students, with flair and talent for a language/languages, drop out of the subject to select more practical subjects because the media and the parent body believe that students ought to learn work place skills at school.


 **11** I think there is a problem with Languages in that their links to Literacy and how they help improve the Literacy skills of students is not understood and recognized.

If parents and other stakeholders were aware of the effectiveness of having a second language to use as a comparison with a student's first, and the great leaps students can make in understanding their own language through studying a second, they may be more inclined to support the excellent work that can occur in Language classrooms.

(Contact details supplied)

 **12** Students would benefit from learning a language beginning in their first year of schooling and continuing throughout the whole of their primary years and start of high school.

 **13** Languages need to be more widely implemented in the curriculum. both at primary and secondary education. An assessment level needs to be established to evaluate the teachers' proficiency in the language.

 **14** In Australia, people all know the importance of learning other language but most of them don't do it. Teachers and schools are promote it hardly but we have not got enough support from the government. It is sad to see only 10% of Australia can speak second language.


✍ 15 There are many problems associated with teaching a foreign language:
- the majority of parents and students don't see any value in it and if they do, they believe Asian languages are the most valuable.
- as a high school language teacher I believe that the introduction of languages in the primary schools has ruined it somewhat for the high school language programs for two reasons: many students start the language in grade 4 (in the past some even started in grade 1), so that by the time they get to year 8 they have had enough, and many have had so many different teachers as well as bad teachers, that they have learned the same things over and over every year and consequently have a very negative attitude towards all language learning. The primary language programs are so wishy-washy that the children learn very little language and feel rather frustrated when they start learning it seriously in grade 8 and realise that they don't know much even after having done it for 4 years in primary school.
- I teach in a very small school and so my classes are also very small. As a result I have a composite 11 and 12 class and I find this very frustrating because, although the class studies the same unit, the two groups are at different levels and I'm always rushing to get through all the work. I feel that both groups are penalised because I can't dedicate as much time as I would like to working on their speaking skill and I would love more time to watch more movies, sing the latest songs, do more cooking, etc. I do some but it's not enough.


✍ 16 I have just finished reading the latest MLTA Quarterly, Vol 138, August 2006. A most interesting and relevant article was written by John Barker, Head of Languages at Kenmore State High School, QLD. The title is "Making language learning work in Queensland schools". I commend it to you for your research.

✍ 17 I am a native speaker of the targeted second language with high proficiency in English. I acquired English as my 2nd language and the experience of which was quite "nightmarish" because I kept on failing my spelling and grammar tests. If I were given the chance to opt out of English at that time, I would have done so already. However English was a compulsory subject in my hometown, for both primary and secondary schools, I had to soldier on and overcome the difficulties with my own determination and perseverance. Thus, I believe that we all have the potential to acquire any 2nd language if we have the right attitude. If we can let the students and the wider community see that foreign languages are as important as English, I am sure the LOTE subjects will be more receptive.

✍ 18 There is too much focus on languages in primary schools. It has been my experience that students at primary schools learn languages in a

situational way as they don't have the cognitive capacity at that stage to fully understand the concepts behind the language, including intercultural concepts. I would like to see compulsory languages in primary removed and focus on compulsory languages in years 8-10 (junior high school)....they then have developed and understanding and hopefully COMPETENCE in English literacy which can be drawn upon when teaching a second language

 **19** I would like to see Languages made compulsory for all students from Years 5 to 9 in order to give the students a solid grounding in a language. Local high schools and primary schools should have closer links with regards to curriculum content. At the moment, as Head of Department in the high school, I am involved in fine-tuning what students are taught in our main feeder primary school in consultation with the two primary LOTE teachers. We are actually planning exactly what each year will learn and I am writing work booklets so that continuity of curriculum and academic rigour is present from the primary into the high school. The two primary LOTE teachers are also going to become part of our high school LOTE staff because they have been isolated. We are a staff of 9 in the LOTE staffroom and will become 11 from 2007 when the 2 primary staff join us.

 **20** There will be relatively limited progress in students' language proficiency in this country as long as there is effectively no link between primary and secondary courses. Whereas in Europe and parts of Asia English is rightly seen as the priority language and students can undertake a six or seven-year course, here there is often just a cultural offering with a smattering of language in primary schools followed by another language in Year 8. Very few students are offered an ongoing and rigorous programme in the same language over the key learning years. In Queensland it is private schools that are maintaining languages such as French. It is difficult to justify the compulsory study of language to Year 10 when there are few teachers willing to teach classes of 30 to reluctant adolescents. Even in Britain, where the motivation should be high, French and German are in decline and the idea of compulsory language is being abandoned. In Queensland there are very few people actually needed to speak Japanese to tourists; Cairns and the Gold Coast are full of tour groups with their own guides visiting shops run by Japanese entrepreneurs. It is generally difficult to promote languages on a utilitarian basis. Languages are needed to open up students' eyes to a wider world and to help them put their own country and language in perspective. If they have the means to travel or to host students from another country, it can be a life-changing experience.
(Contact details supplied)

✍ 21 It is extremely worrying that Ed Queensland has started to organise a trial in West Moreton area to basically cut LOTE from their schools, dependant on local school management, if they wish, and introduce instead 'Studies' which will be units close to SOSE cultural units (The words LOTE were not allowed to be used in referring to these units). If 'successful' in this area, would it continue to be introduced throughout the state? Many reasons were cited, including a lack of competent language teachers, and widespread 'behaviour management' problems in LOTE classes. This is of great concern.

I think that the problems of the perception of learning LOTE as unimportant, is endemic to Australia/s culture at the moment, and needs a major mind-shift which would be more effective with a many-pronged approach.

* There could be more publicity (on national TV, SBS & ABC) about successful language learners, or successful learning programs, or maybe even a series of ads about some really successful Australians and how learning a language has enhanced their careers.

* Each language teacher throughout the country could present simultaneously (within a time-frame of a month or so) a package to their parent bodies about the importance of learning a LOTE for enhanced literacy, career opportunities and engagement with our neighbours.

* a program of guest speakers from local area attending schools, who have done well because of a language skill.

* Register of local people who are native speakers for visiting or helping in schools.

(Contact details supplied)

✍ 22 I have concerns over Japanese (eg) being taught in primary schools as students often get put in classes where other students have not done Japanese (eg) and so they have to start from scratch. They often think they know stuff because they did it in primary school and this lulls them into feeling they know it all.

If they have learnt a lot in Primary school they often can't progress as the course starts from the beginning again. Students then get bored and drop out of Japanese.

I also have concerns about making language study compulsory. It becomes a struggle as students realise that a scripted language is difficult and requires a lot of study which students are often not prepared to do.

Where students choose to be in a language class the behaviour is much better and a higher standard is reached because everyone is keen to learn. This tends to encourage more students to continue to Senior language study.

✍ 23 Some of the questions (e.g. Q153, Q177, Q165) are difficult to answer as these are case by case. "Improving self esteem" depends on the student's personality, "Special need" of "what"? Should I trust politicians?

✍ 24 I am currently involved in a three year LOTE Trial in the Moreton Region of Queensland which will be an 'exemplar' for the rest of the Regions in the State.

I am very concerned because the Principals leading this trial along with the representative from Education Queensland want to offer 'LOTE Strands' which will see LOTE being chosen upon community-decision and classes learning 'cultural or other studies'. This means, some students may never learn a LOTE. This also means that the schools will have no momentum to find quality LOTE teachers. This is a very worrying position I find myself in and one in which the National Statement for Languages has not been given due attention.

(Contact details supplied)

✍ 25 As a very successful LOTE teacher, many of my colleagues' complaints stem from their itinerant position - because they are a 'bit' of a teacher, they are often left out of school activities and communication problems exist.

I think that teacher training and preparation for LOTE teaching is poor.

I think methodology plays an integral part in successful teaching - if the teacher can present the LOTE in an appropriate manner to the students, it is more accepted.

Also, if teachers can be made permanent and some consistency of employment provided, then students are more settled.

LOTE teaching can be very rewarding.

✍ 26 Since, when visiting another country, we mostly need to read things like menus, movie ads, tourist brochures, etc. for a narrow range of simple info., and since we rarely write in the LOTE while there, I feel there is little point, especially in the early years of LOTE study, for emphasis on reading & writing, particularly in LOTEs with different scripts, like Japanese and Chinese. I think it is often this that deflates students' initial interest, and if we were to let these skills go and focus only on oral-aural skills, classes would be more lively, less stressful, and we would send students out with a useful package of skills, better consolidated because of the time saved from reading-writing.

I also think too many teachers teach stereotypical cultural info because it is what children enjoy, and Aussies like to group people into "them" and "us".

Cultural aspects are best handled by exposure to natives of the target country, but how? I for one am too embarrassed to invite into my classroom someone with whom I myself lack the fluency to converse freely in front of my students.

To me, I can do my absolute best at teaching a love of the LOTE and its people, but all that can be sabotaged by prejudiced views coming from parents. It is in the home that openness to other cultures and LOTEs is best encouraged. Aussies are poor at this. We are largely racist but don't want to even look at it.

✍ 27 Some questions are very black or white. For example question 177, students with physical special needs should not be withdrawn from LOTE classes whilst students with severe mental special needs would probably not profit from these lessons.


Also the question about LOTE starting in Primary school. The answer to this question depends on how it is taught in primary school. We have noticed a very strong aversion against Indonesian in our school. The majority of students have done it for 2 years in primary school but haven't really learned much about the language and they find it extremely boring.

✍ 28 [More support needed by administration in some areas](#)

✍ 29 I believe that the strengthening of languages in Australian School depends first on parents requesting/supporting that their children study a LOTE at school, there should be a better continuity between primary and secondary schools programs. For example a language course that starts in primary at year 5 and continues to year 8 using the same principles, too often courses are repeated in year 8, students lose interest and lose motivation. Over my teaching career I found that the main cause for the lack of motivation in LOTE is due to the fact that students perceive they are not reaching good levels especially in the productive skills (speaking and writing)


✍ 30 [I have a very strong LOTE department in my school; however it is not valued by Admin or other teachers. We are put into the Social Science Department and often it is forgotten that we are a Key Learning Area. I think all Principals and Deputies should be educated on the value of Languages, as they are sometimes very ignorant and unsupportive. At the moment Admin has decided that not all students in Year 8 need to study languages, even though we have 3 qualified language teachers. Next year they propose to only](#)

offer language study to 125 out of 300 year 8 students. It seems to me that we are being sabotaged at all times with Languages set up to fail.


 **31** In regards to the above questions, one most important point is that teaching Language Teachers are being treated as NCT (non contact time) cover up for classroom teachers! Even though not verbally expressed, it is felt by many language teachers and that creates a big Negative barrier. This Negative feeling urges Language Teachers (who are fully trained teachers with a B.Ed. - Bachelor of Education Degree) to give up LOTE teaching and go back to full classroom teaching. This is why there are not so many Language teachers around! Having said that, I am treated fairly well at the school I teach LOTE.

Children at my school from Pre-school through to Grade 7 are learning a second language and doing very well. Introducing a (second) foreign Language to children at an early stage is of great importance. A young brain is like a fresh sponge ready to absorb and soak up information.

Least but not last, many children are keen to learn a second however if the interest is not supported or promoted at home, it does not help! I strongly believe that parents in Australia need to be informed how important for a child to be able to have basic experience in a foreign language.

 **32** It concerns me how little languages are studied in Queensland - I would suggest that the amount studied is probably the lowest in the country and is looking like it will be even less.

I feel that Education Queensland is too picky with its Language teachers and I think that encouraging teachers to diversify into a language through TAFE (as has happened in Victoria) particularly for primary schools would help to solve the shortage of LOTE teachers. I also feel that the curriculum set is unreasonably difficult for the level and time we have with students, and know that many LOTE teachers in Queensland do not even use it - but make their own programs using the outcomes from QSA.

 **33** Since I teach in six schools, some of these topics are difficult to respond to.


Unfortunately, language learning often seems to be regarded as a fun experience for children to dip into. To be of any real value languages must be studied seriously over a number of years. Then one achieves the satisfaction of access to a whole new world. At the moment, children learn enough to know it will take some work to reach that point.

From what I have read and heard, the number of students taking advanced maths and science subjects, economics, Ancient/Modern History is declining. The number of students learning languages is declining for much the same reasons. They require serious effort and they are no longer prerequisites for entry into university. Obviously, the study of a foreign language should be part of any Commonwealth senior certificate.


When I applied for a French visa from Munich consulate in 1998, I made my request in German. They asked where I came from and were surprised because 'normally Australians don't speak a language other than their own.'

When students or parents complain about doing a language, they usually say that they 'can't even do English properly yet'. (However, I do not believe Australian children are less intelligent than children in other countries.) Next they say, 'You don't have to do it in year 8 anyhow.' (so from now on, I will put all my strength into being a nuisance.)

The attitude of the school principal and other staff is crucial.

 **34** Most benefits arising from second languages only come with fluency which rarely comes at all at high school.

Students are sick of languages by the end of primary school - it should not be compulsory for those who do not want to do it any further - a further 12 months in year 8 for non-engaged students is less useful than a single semester.

 **35** I think that regular class teachers, teacher aides and principals should be given professional development about the reasons for learning languages other than English. They often see it as irrelevant and they had a bad experience themselves in school. They very often unintentionally sabotage language teachers with their bad attitudes and lack of understanding in this area, by giving it bad publicity to other staff, students and parents. Sometimes they actively put it down as well in some schools.

I think there should be a parent evening every year about language learning.

I think that language teachers (and specialist teachers in general, such as Music and PE as well) could be better respected by general classroom teachers, and not just looked at as babysitters while they have non-contact time.

The primary schools where languages are liked by staff, parents and children, are the ones where the language teacher involves everyone in events like


Bastille Day, Oktoberfest, excursions to Japanese restaurants, and other cultural events, and whereby learning the language is not isolated as an academic type dry subject, but as a means of communication, and as a fun, well developed and thought-out program, where students learn about the culture, customs, famous people from the country, history and geography, food, clothing, weather etc.


I think less experienced languages teachers (graduates) should not be sent at once to isolated areas to teach languages. Due to the distance from a city, and rural lifestyle, many rural areas have a poor attitude towards and understanding of the reasons for language learning in schools. Sending graduates there burns them out quickly, as they must not only teach, and organise cultural activities, but also act as an information disseminator, publicist and promoter, and often have to justify themselves and their subject to parents, and more experienced staff and principals, and students.

I think that all feeder schools to a certain high school should give the Language offered in that high school.

I think that there should be a way for distance education to continue the education of a student who had French at one school and moves to a school where Japanese is taught - there should be an option for this student, to continue their French by distance ed, AS WELL as Japanese, OR INSTEAD. This would help with problems of students changing schools and languages every year.

I think that all classroom teachers should be strongly encouraged as a professional development to sit in on a languages class for 1.5 hours per week for a year, so that they have some understanding of language learning.

 **36** I am very fortunate to be in a school that values language and as a result about 18% of students complete a language by the end of Year 12. I think we need some guidance on how to keep parents accurately informed and excited about language. We are always competing for our market share of the students. Language teachers should take heart because we are not the only subject that has to do this. I believe as teachers of language we need to take every opportunity to promote language in our school and in our community. (Contact details supplied)

 **37** I am an itinerant teacher, teaching at 3 different schools and my responses to the above question would be different for each school. The key point on how to improve languages learning in my opinion is: you cannot start in grade 6/7 for a year or two (often just for 45 minutes - imagine learning SOSE, science or any other subject in grade 6, what would the outcome be???. learning another language has to start as early as possible, on a play based curriculum. at high school it can then become a elective

✍ 38 Language learning in schools needs to be promoted in an informative way from sources other than the language teacher in the school. Some schools do not provide the recommended number of hours for language learning. Ongoing language proficiency should be provided for language teachers.

✍ 39 In my Secondary School I find that language teaching is not only not supported, but openly regarded as totally unnecessary; so much so that one Deputy Principal said to me quite openly that it were up to them LOTE would not be part of the core learning areas and should never be considered to be taught at school AT ALL.

✍ 40 I have answered the questions mainly from my role in the primary school. However, I recognise that secondary issues are different. It seems that the level of support for languages decreases in secondary. Most parents and students are relatively happy for their children to study a language in primary school - with the thought perhaps that "it can't hurt them - but they don't really learn anything" whereas in secondary, I feel there is a much bigger gap between those that value languages, and those that don't- "why do we need another language if we live in Australia?, etc"

✍ 41 Need for obvious Government support for Languages Programs eg via media, policy
Regular support shown eg via media from Parent Associations

✍ 42 In my experience, it's all about attitude: "you can lead a horse to water but you can't make it drink" etc. If the children come to languages with no preconceptions, then it's up to the teacher, and I have good success with these students. If, in the other hand, they have had a bad previous experience, or (especially) if the parents are anti-LOTE - I have some parents who proudly boast that their children are withdrawn to do extra literacy instead of doing LOTE, "Thank goodness he's not smart enough to do LOTE"..... I'm on a losing wicket here!!! Attitude has far more to do with ultimate success than innate ability. Another difficulty lies with the inability of students to listen; my year 6 class in particular will do sheets but absolutely refuse to listen either to me, to a tape or video or to each other, and I am at a loss to see how they will succeed with oral language without acquiring that willingness. (Contact details supplied)

✍ 43 I would like to see all schools following mandated time allocation to subjects and administrations that support this subject as a viable program in their schools.

✍ 44 I have taught LOTE (Japanese) for the past 5 years and extremely enjoy teaching the subject. I feel that this subject should still be continued throughout primary and secondary schools.

✍ 45 From my point of view parents of our students should be included in whole process of teaching and bringing up their children. From my perspective of 2 years of teaching this is very important and have a big influence on results of our work.

I would be interested in any results of this survey.

(Contact details supplied)

✍ 46 I teach at a state high school 540 students where there is a single LOTE (Indonesian) taught. The school services a low socio-economic area on the southern outskirts of Brisbane and its LOTE program has been marginalised for the past four years by Year 8 classes receiving only 46 hours of LOTE (one 70-minute lesson per week) over the full year. In 2007 only 60% of the Year 8 cohort will gain access to LOTE for a total of 35 hours (three 70-minute lessons per week) over one term only. The school is looking forward to the day when LOTE will no longer be mandated as compulsory for Year 8 in Queensland so they can offer it as an elective-only subject which will effectively kill-off the LOTE program at the school.

There is an element of ignorance, racism and xenophobia in the community. I have had parents of my best Year 8 students not permit their students to elect Indonesian in Year 9 because it is a "terrorist language". Rather than trying to raise the awareness of the community it services, the school is prepared to perpetuate the ignorance through inaction and further marginalisation of LOTE. The Principal has told me that to many members of our local community their immediate suburb is their "whole world" and, as such, they don't see the relevance of LOTE. I see this as a defeatist attitude and one that reinforces the ignorance and prejudice in our local community. It appears that the driving factor at our school is to get students into any employment, no matter how menial, and not to concern itself with developing worldly citizens.


At the senior years LOTE is always discriminated against. Every year two or three of the schools most academically gifted students wish to continue with LOTE at Years 11 and 12 but are counselled out of doing it or told that there

are not enough of them to form a class. It is curious that the school is prepared to run Year 12 Physics classes of four students but no such allowance is made for LOTE. Even the option of Distance Education is not considered for these students despite the LOTE teacher languishing on a LOTE teaching load of 41% (18.75% in 2007) and having to teach in two other subject areas to make up a full teaching load.

At my school it is not a matter lack of a qualified LOTE teacher (I have been teaching Indonesian for almost 20 years in the N.T. and Queensland) or a lack of resources. Since 2003 when I commenced there it has always been a lack of appropriate time allocation and an unwillingness to go out on a limb and publicly support LOTE to an unsupportive and unresponsive community.

In Queensland there are strict rules governing time allocation and student exemption from LOTE but these are generally ignored by schools with marginalised LOTE programs through the approval of Regional and District Directors who have the power to "bend the rules". So much for a multicultural Queensland !!!!

I am free to provide any further feedback.
(Contact details supplied)

 47 I am privileged to be the sole teacher in the highest multi cultural school in Qld. We offer German now non compulsory in year 8. My 9/10 class is composed of very diligent students the majority of whom speak three languages. Dealing with non English backgrounds and the high incidence of students rejoining the subject throughout the year has made me construct a focus within the work program. I am rigorous in the separate instruction of grammar. This knowledge drives the topics not the other way around. An increasing number of students are now electing to continue senior studies in German French and Japanese. This must be done through Distance Education. We have an after school Vietnamese class and the Chinese students are similarly instructed at another school. We have also catered for Spanish and Italian students at the Senior level. Some of the languages of the migrant students need to be recognized - particularly the Middle East. Small classes of senior language students should be allowed to run.

 48 To Whom It May Concern:

- many language teachers are disillusioned and stressed as behaviour management takes up the most part of our lessons
- I would like to see a focus on maybe geography and culture with only language elements

- of course that can be done by a language teacher but it is a lot of work building up such a work programme without support or supporting resources; furthermore it is not in accordance with the syllabus
 - I still had to resort to this as behaviour was escalating
 - the language coordinator for our district was cut and little effort made to replace her; isolation has grown since then
 - as a result I have resigned for the end of the year and I hope that changes will be made to continue language learning
-

✍ 49 Even so I am in many ways lucky with one of my schools, a big problem is the travelling between schools. Being seen just as a visitor. Not being able to follow up issues. Generally working in isolation eg: help available in classrooms but not in specialist areas. Very often not being seen as a teacher - no recognition. No options to progress professionally. In-services always on weekends or school holidays.

✍ 50 The educational district in which I teach is trialling a non-compulsory approach to LOTE teaching and learning. I see that at many schools, with attitudes as they are, this will translate into let's get rid of LOTE. We have always been last in line and I feel that we are now not in the running for a fair go at all. I fear my child may not get the chance to learn a foreign language if this trial is implemented or I may have to send him to a private school. Many parents cannot afford this option and so will have their child's education limited. I also fear that in 10 or 20 years Australia will become more racist and less accepting of other cultures. We only have to look at racial violence and attitudes as they are now to see how important learning about other cultures and language is.
(Contact details supplied)

✍ 51 Languages education would be improved if it was given support by those in authority and not treated as a non-contact time for classroom teachers. Language teachers need a well-resourced room allocated to them and students should not be taken out of language classes for other things. There needs to be continuity. Students need to be told that language learning is important and they need to see role models. Native speakers should be welcomed and school exchanges celebrated as major events not extra things to be done. Other people, apart from the language teacher, need to take an active interest in and model language learning and cultural awareness and sensitivity.

✍ 52 I'd like to see funding for a dedicated LOTE classroom in each school, so the atmosphere of the classroom can portray the culture and flavour of the LOTE.
(Contact details supplied)

✍ 53 I believe that children have a natural interest in other languages and other children in the world. This interest can be developed and promoted through many extra curriculum activities such as cooking, drawing, calligraphy, painting, dancing and various sports. It is the extra activities which captivate children or extra programs like trips, billets and exchanges. Almost needless to say, this requires a passionate teacher with endless energy. In the Primary School context, those teachers are working mostly on their own. A wise principal will soon appreciate the extra work completed by such a teacher and the benefits these activities will have on the profile of the school.

The Arts Council has many exciting performances for schools; I would suggest more multicultural performances touring schools as a form of promotion.

Smaller classes are definitely a plus for language learning. The 28 to 30 children in a language class makes it extremely noisy for dialogue rehearsal. Children need to do all the talking in language classes. In my view, large classes create more teacher centered instruction.

✍ 54 Very happy to be contacted.
I am a very dedicated language teacher involved on a number of Executive LOTE committees (Modern Language Teachers Association of QLD, President of the National French Teachers Association, QLD French Teachers Branch....) and very involved in the promotion of LOTE activities at local, State and National level. I am also involved in a LOTE teachers Mentoring project and a National Intercultural Language Teaching and Learning in Practice Research Project. I have won two French-teaching scholarships, presented at State and National conferences and produced a number of highly-praised teaching resources. The Executives I am on work extremely hard to promote and maintain their languages which seems quite unfair when other subject areas are not under the same continuous pressure to prove the importance of their subject. Some of my colleagues are involved in a Values in LOTE writing project because the Curriculum Council has designated LOTE along with Mathematics as one of the two subject areas most DEVOID of VALUES
!@#%\$%

My school is undergoing international accreditation and has a significant number of international students. Therefore it is difficult to understand the ambivalent attitude towards LOTE. I was head-hunted for (name of school)

which had French to only Year 10 standard in 2003 when I arrived. We now have Senior French and are one of only a handful of schools with Year 12 Extension French. I have organised two study tours- Noumea and a group from France.

It didn't take long to realise that my principal (has just retired and therefore no excuses for ignorance) was very lacking in basic knowledge about LOTE and very prepared for me to wear the whole workload. He didn't know that LOTE in QLD had been compulsory for 10 years in Years 6 - 10. His advice when I approached him about risk management analysis for overseas tours was "not my job, principals don't do this kind of thing, go and speak to workplace health and safety! Nevertheless I persevered with the assistance of a second French teacher but told the school that I would not undertake study tours again if the second French teacher wasn't replaced when she returned to Canada. She hasn't been and therefore I won't do study tours because of the complete lack of understanding of the time and responsibility factors.

In the 4 years that I have been there, there have been consistent messages about (name of school) wanting to be a school of language excellence, yet the number of LOTE teachers in our school has been halved and Multicultural Studies (watered down SOSE course with a minimum of language) is being introduced in 2007 alongside Japanese and French. At no stage have I seen any indication of initiatives that would enable a school of LOTE Excellence to operate within my school. We have one Japanese teacher, one French teacher (myself), plus a Chinese class and a Latin class that operates out of hours. The school would be ideal for LOTE excellence because of the generally high academic standard but the support from Admin is minimal. National Statement for LOTE 2005 - 2008 states clearly that LOTE is to be a priority and that the administration team is responsible for setting this up.


Until recently the LOTE department was under the umbrella of English, now the Acting Principal has taken it on and it is the only subject area at (name of school) without a time/money allocation for a Head of Department for LOTE. Our principal constantly gives the excuse that there are no LOTE teachers to be found for not upping the staffing numbers but we have had several very good French teachers wanting to teach at our school and he has chosen not to put them on. I have passed on names of prospective and highly qualified teachers when we have been short who really wanted to be at my school but they have not been contacted.

There are further inconsistencies with the continuation from Year 9 into Year 10. Last year the Year 9 French class (one of the ones without a teacher for a month) of 25 students was reduced to 10 students in Year 10 because they were allowed to drop the subject after Year 9. This year, (after having been told that the procedure and subject selection form are the same as last year!)

the students have been told that it is clear on the form that they are not to change after Year 9. Consistency please !

Last year 4 out of 5 junior French classes were left without a teacher for a month (second French teacher returned to Canada and I had Senior Maths/French timetable) even because they know me and because I have excellent resources (in French as I have worked really hard at this and have upgraded technology, brought back resources from overseas, etc....) I am concerned that after only two years of consolidation of Senior French, Multicultural Studies will undercut my numbers and I have run offline classes in French for two years to get the numbers up so that it could be included in the main timetable.

ED QLD insists on LOTE teachers doing a proficiency test as well as tertiary qualifications and pre-service teaching with a rating. The Executives I am on feel that this is extremely unfair as other subject areas do not require this and teachers cannot gain permanency until they pass all sections of this test. ED QLD have also introduced the LOTE Trials in Moreton Region and we are very apprehensive about this as there is a minimum of information re the project and reports have come back that in 2007 LOTE will no longer be compulsory at any level in ED QLD schools. Thus we have a constant stream of LOTE teachers from ED QLD into the private system where LOTE is generally well-supported.
(Contact details supplied)

 **55** My school offers an immersion German program in Years 8 -10 with an 8 week in-country experience in Term 4 of Year 10 as well as normal language classes in German and Japanese 8 -12. The immersion experience is an amazingly successful one in terms of language acquisition and positive attitudes towards the learning of languages.

In Qld few mainstream students study languages in the senior phase of learning. Students need an incentive to carry on language learning when they are faced with the wide choice they know enjoy at the end of Yrs 8, 9 and 10. An incentive is needed to encourage those students with an aptitude or / and an interest in languages to continue.

The incentive might be

- beginner courses in languages the students has not previously studies
 - assistance with overseas exchanges
 - credit towards the leaving certificate
 - MONEY!!!
 - or another form of incentive that demonstrates to students and their families that governments truly believe that languages are worth learning.
-

✍ 56 A committee of supportive parents set up to support the language teacher (often only 1 per school) might prevent the marginalising of language. I have taught in High schools, primary schools and colleges from P - 12. The support for languages can range from negative support to great support, however this is often dependent on the Administration at that time and staff changes in that arena can cause a change of support very swiftly. At one High School the Principal wanted an Asian language course implemented to stop enrolments moving to competing schools. However as I successfully grew that language course, a Deputy Principal in charge of timetabling was doing his utmost to dismantle it. Maths courses in Yrs 11 - 12 were allowed to run with less than 15 students however a Year 11 Japanese class with 14 and the possibility of transferring students was cut. It also necessitated students in senior coming to school for a triple lesson on their "flexi-day" - a non contact day for seniors at that school. There were no school buses to take them home at 11 am so that again reduced the numbers of students able to study that course.

This attitude that maths, science etc are more important than languages prevailed for 6 years until I left that school when the students were only offered distance education - a difficult option for language students especially.

Every year I needed the support of vocal parents to help keep the language course running, and this despite the fact that my hard work setting up a valuable exchange program and sister school relationship saw Japanese gain for the school an improved profile in the community. In that case the Principal kept encouraging me to fight the Deputy for Japanese to succeed, without overtly demanding it himself.

In another High School, Japanese was marginalised to before school classes and flexible learning day timetabling. In primary schools it is often seen as the token subject and in one school I was used as a substitute for students not allowed to go to school camp - just do a day of Japanese!

The most support has been in private schools where Japanese has been offered from Preparatory right through to Year 12. This I believe is because the private systems see that most parents do value languages.

✍ 57 I have been teaching languages for 22 years. In that time I have seen LOTE well supported in my school and my school tries to offer as many LOTE subjects as possible. But, language classes have gone from very strong numbers to mediocre levels. We are now in direct competition with creative arts, sports subjects, and ICT. We are not a Core Subject and herein lies a major problem.

While I would happily debate with anyone about the lifelong virtues of LOTE study-one could also argue about the value of all the other subjects mentioned above. How do we make our subject as important as others in the school community?

In my LOTE department we are try to come up with all sorts of activities and initiatives to encourage more students to choose a LOTE but also keep up with their LOTE studies into Senior. We work very hard to do this.

Where LOTE teachers are disadvantaged is that we must somehow always have to "market" ourselves in the school community to help make our subject viable in everyone's eyes. The tyranny of distance with Europe and Japan I feel is the major reason why students and parents don't always appreciate the need for to have a LOTE in their repertoire of subjects-but this should not be so give the global community nature of the world now. If we as a nation are to prepare our students for fuller participation in their world-then LOTE study must be made compulsory for all students at least to year 10 level. Up to year 12 level would be icing on the cake. LOTE teachers and schools need support to help convince students and parents of the validity of learning a LOTE.

We need to find out the realities of what would happen if fewer and fewer students took on LOTE studies for the future of our country and the students' futures themselves.

I believe that it is essential for Language learning to be over a full year period for year 8 students. I applaud my school for giving students' access to 3 LOTEs in Year 8, offering a 12 week programme for 3 languages to give students a chance to sample all three we have (Italian, French and Japanese). We also offer an extension programme for Year 7 into Year 8 students who have had several years in a LOTE previously. This is a full year course. A great idea.


After that Year 8 students may then choose up to 2 LOTEs in year 9 but again there is huge competition with other elective subjects. A frequent comment I hear is "Miss, I would have chosen "X" language in year 9 or 11 but I couldn't fit it into my Junior/ Senior study programme because I need to do XYZ subjects to help me get into XYZ course at uni. Or my parents want me to do EYZ after year 12. This is the big problem that needs addressing.

Another problem is that we have a system whereby students may drop out of elective subjects (LOTE is one of several) in years 9-11. I think this creates problems for student numbers and prevents students from fully exploring their potential in that subject.

The loss of lessons due to LOTE classes being on a particular line in a timetable especially at year 11 and 12 level can be a problem some years and also whereby many lessons are lost from public holidays or other school

activities can result in a shorter teaching programme than could be delivered and less contact time in class.


This is detrimental to any year level of LOTE. But, this loss of class time does happen to other subject areas too-so it would be unfair of me to single LOTE classes out here. However, timetabling can have quite a major effect on LOTE teaching too.

 **58** I have a background in LOTE Syllabus Implementation and have university Languages teacher training experience on top of 15 years as a Japanese teacher from Year 4 to Year 12 in both State and independent schools. In whatever school setting, it is important that the Languages teacher(s) develop relationships with parent communities and school administrations. However, the very first thing the teacher needs to do is develop a well-conceived, rigorous programme which connects with students where they are, which engages their hearts and their heads and which "spirals up" in terms of content range, depth and intellectual challenge. In so doing, teachers develop strong relationships with their students and behaviour issues decline/disappear. Students need to be taught to explicitly self-reflect on their own culture and to reflect on the target language culture as they encounter it through their study of the language.

My own experience shows that Languages teachers need to seek out and actively work with "kindred spirits" on staff to develop lively, connected programmes. Dialogue with parents and other school community members about their Languages programme also helps engender interest and build relationships. Finding a showcase beyond the classroom for Languages students to show what they can do is also very helpful.

In terms of support for the development of such quality programmes, I believe the notion of a "flying squad" of expert Languages teachers who can be called in to assist school communities to "get it right" for their context would be very valuable.

 **59** I am happy to be contacted (Contact details supplied)

 **60** Unfortunately, when it comes to subject selection parents would consider a second language at the bottom of their list. I have been told again and again, particularly by Australians (with no other background but English) of the irrelevance of a second language. Parents that have migrated to Australia are more open to their children learning a second language even if it is not their own mother language because they see the importance of it.

✍ 61 The general public (ie Parents) doesn't understand the relevance of learning languages, as the world has (in most cases) always accommodated them in English.

Learning a language needs to be viewed as an essential and "core" subject like Maths or English, rather than a federal government requirement we force kids to do. How we do that is by being vocal. We need to highlight the issues in the media.

In recent years if Language teachers run overseas trips to their target language, they are expected to do it in their holidays and on top of their normal workload with no recognition for the time and energy it takes.

Principals have and do (I have observed and lived with) have complete power of what does and doesn't happen. A high school I know of has scrapped Language altogether, but claiming it teaches intercultural skills through rich tasks, and doesn't need to teach a language per se.

The federal policy without checks that it is taking place (many schools only do a language for a term, before changing it or allowing students to opt out) seems like a complete waste of time.


All the best with your survey, I hope you find some brilliant ways to improve the image of language learning.

(Contact details supplied)


✍ 62 The staff at my school has an issue with the teaching of LOTE in primary schools. The quality of the program at many schools is diminishing, due to the lack of quality teachers and the attitude of other teachers within the school to the subject. It is seen merely as non contact time for the classroom teachers and the quality of lessons is often not what it should be. Students, when arriving at high school, are often disillusioned and unmotivated to participate in the LOTE lessons due to their primary school experiences.

✍ 63 The quality of Primary school programs is diminishing. In our area, the Primary LOTE program is severely lacking due to lack of expertise, staffing, funding and support from educational institutes (Principals and district office). We believe at my school that compulsory LOTE in the Primary years is merely a non contact time provider, rather than a quality learning experience in LOTE. Students become quickly uninterested in studying a LOTE when they get to us at high school due to the aforementioned factors in Primary school LOTE learning. We recently attended a Brisbane MLTAQ meeting for

LOTE teachers in the Gold Coast region and Brisbane, which discussed that majority of LOTE teachers, started their love of LOTE in their high school years where it was a new and exciting learning experience. We have gone on to follow our passion for LOTE to become teachers as a result of this. We have discussed this with many other secondary LOTE teachers to only begin compulsory LOTE in high school. They agree. This would also solve many issues related to quality LOTE programs, staffing etc. (Contact details supplied)

 **64** The community needs to be educated that if they want their children to be global citizens, they need to understand other cultures and learn other languages in school. Otherwise they will lag behind.


(Contact details supplied)

 **65** The introduction of languages in the primary school has greatly suffered from the fact that there were not enough proficient language teachers available. Therefore "LOTE" (GET RID OF THAT TERM, PLEASE) has been treated as a gap-filler in order to provide classroom teachers with some well deserved preparation and correction time. The result is, that most new students entering grade 8 are fed up with the subject. Officially, they have been taught according to the Queensland LOTE curriculum, which is very ambitious to say the least, in reality however, they have been playing games, colouring in national flags, dressing up in national costumes, participating in cook-ups, and learning how to count up to twenty year after year.

In my opinion, until we have enough teachers who are truly proficient in the foreign language, we should concentrate on teaching foreign languages in secondary schools properly and free up the curriculum in the primary school to teach students basic literacy and numeracy skills.

Furthermore, in devising our foreign language curriculums, we seem to be either re-inventing the wheel every time, or to copy ways of foreign language teaching from countries where these programs are not very successful. In my opinion a research should be done on the different types of curriculums and the way of delivering them in countries where there is a strong tradition in foreign language teaching and learning. (Countries like Holland, Germany and the Scandinavian countries)

(Contact details supplied)

 **66** Many Australians seem to think that, since most educated non-native English speakers speak English, it is not necessary to learn other languages. This is a problem which needs to be addressed if language learning is to be given the support and focus it needs for Australia to continue to play an

important role in the world. Our attitude should be that we gain greater understanding of other cultures and cultural practices when we know how to communicate in languages other than our own. Of course there are economic advantages to be gained, but this alone should not be the main reason for undertaking LOTE study.

We should celebrate and broadcast the achievements of our students when they use other languages. A past student of our school studied in Paris and works for the UN using her French language skills. Another set up a business while living in Japan and regularly hops between the two cultures and countries. A third student lives and works in Germany and runs an IT business with her German husband. There are many more stories like these.

People need to believe that languages are for life and they enrich us all by celebrating diversity and complexity and uniqueness while supporting inclusiveness and international understanding. We need to convince students and parents that their lives can only be enriched by continuing their LOTE studies beyond school and university to their adult lives. We can focus on the successes of the thousands of non-native English speaking bi-lingual residents who call Australia home and make the connection with them and our students learning a LOTE.


 67 WITHOUT PREJUDICE

At my school the language program is very well supported and this is due to the fact that I work hard to promote it and network with parents and teachers. The idea of choosing only "certain languages" to be funded or supported by government bodies displays a form of intolerance and is restricting choice: not something we purport to do in a democratic society.

THIS IS WHAT I THINK HAS GONE WRONG WITH LANGUAGE TEACHING IN PRIMARY SCHOOL


The idea of trans-disciplinary units of work with classroom teachers in theory is good however it can be very unpractical when one language teacher is expected to plan and develop resources and materials to fit in with many units of work being done by say 10 different classroom teachers in one school. At some point one would ask the question: How can the integrity of a language program be maintained and show some continuity in learning in communicative concepts of the language when a teacher is being asked to "put aside" the fundamental communicative elements to learn a particular language so that they can integrate something the classroom teacher thinks it would be "fun" to do in the foreign language as well? Learning a foreign language is a discipline in its own right and when we are asked to teach topics that don't lend themselves to open communication or that are too difficult for the student to understand in the foreign language this is when we devalue the foreign language and move away from the real teaching of that

language as a method to communicate needs, wants and interest etc. as would be appropriate to primary level language education.

 **68** Chinese is the only LOTE on offer at our high school and in recent years we have managed to overcome a lot of negativity from all quarters - students, parents and even other subject areas - to build a relatively strong department.

Classes in Years 9 -12 where the subject is an option chosen by the students experience few behaviour and discipline issues and the students undertaking the subject are motivated, have a sound skill base and are well equipped for the study of Chinese.

Our greatest challenge lies with the Year 8 classes, where study of Chinese is compulsory, class sizes are too big and the students have either had a bad experience studying Chinese at the primary level or studied a different LOTE altogether, such as German or Japanese. It is difficult to reconnect with the students who have had disengaged with Chinese at the primary school level and they can see very little relevance in studying the subject at all. A way in which we feel we could best work around this is to discuss the possibility of teaching in conjunction with other areas such as SOSE and Home Economics, where aspects of Chinese culture could be taught and then linked to our language teaching. This way the students are exposed to more of the culture than is possible for us to do in the language classroom in one lesson and shows a connectedness to other areas of their academic life. The more they are able to see how the Chinese culture is interwoven with their culture, then the more relevant and valued it will be.

 **69** I believe I have sufficient time allocated to language study each week - for me the issue is frequency of lessons. Effective language learning happens as a result of frequent exposure and re-enforcement. Two lessons a week is insufficient to make this happen. As a result, progress is slow and students do not experience the continuity of learning that is essential for effective learning.


The primary issue for me is that despite my best endeavours, my school community, students and parents just don't realise the value and importance of second language learning. They believe that because 'the rest of the world' is learning English, we don't need to learn another language. However, this simply puts us at a major disadvantage because we are immediately saying that we are not smart enough to learn another language as so many from overseas are doing.

 **70** As a multilinguist (speaker of Vietnamese, English, Chinese, Cantonese and learning Spanish), I am passionate about learning and teaching of all foreign languages. However, my enthusiasm is not shared by a vast section of

the community (teaching colleagues, parents, students, what have you). It is hard to convince many people who hold negative views on the learning of foreign languages. Some people even want to abolish language teaching altogether because they feel that LOTE steals resources from other subjects or students are forced to learn a new language when they still struggle with their first language. Too often, language teachers are left to sink or swim in many schools with little or no support. Mind you there some badly trained language teachers (native speakers who do not speak good English or English speakers who do not have a good command of the language they are teaching) There are many reasons why language teaching and learning is not well-received or fail to attract sufficient support, the space given here is too limited to outline them all.

I believe that learning a foreign language will not be taken seriously until the Commonwealth Government or state government makes it compulsory in primary school and junior high. There are other supporting mechanisms such as increase in the number of hours, training and professional development for language teachers, funding and scholarships to encourage language learning. The level of support and value placed on foreign languages teaching and learning need to be strengthened. The whole community (parents, students, politicians, what have you) needs to be involved and consulted on languages learning strategies.

I am more than happy to provide further information if requested.


 **71** I have had several SEU students participate in my classes over the past year and while their level of understanding may not be as high as other student in the class, I think it is important for them to be involved. They really enjoy being a part of my Japanese classes and it is important to include them and give them the opportunity to learn what other students do.

LANGUAGES (no longer LOTE!) :) are always the first thing to get scrapped when sports or music or another activity crops up. It doesn't seem to matter that my classes are missed which can make it very difficult to get accurate assessment done while still trying to motivate students and allowing them to enjoy their learning experiences.

At present I have only have one native speaker in my classroom because time is so restricted and every lesson counts! If I had more time I would definitely involve native speakers in my classes as it makes experiences more real and relevant for students.

I believe there is a culture instilled in QLD schools that languages education is not important. Some parents do value learning another language but others can be very unsupportive. The benefits for students are amazing, especially


when you look at how well they understand their first language and culture when they learn another. Parents should be involved and aware of what their children are learning so they can see the value

 **72** While it is difficult to comment on the systems operating in State schools because independent schools are by their nature, independent, to a large extent especially in Languages study. Our school operates the IB Diploma as well as the Qld OP system (in Years 11 and 12) and so our school has a "built-in" Languages component and the IB Middle Years Programme (Years 6-10) which has a particular emphasis on compulsory Languages programmes. Thus questions that relate to "making" or "continuing" Languages as compulsory to Year 10 are not so relevant for our school.

From my contact with teachers in State schools over the years there does appear to have been various "waves" of interest in Languages depending on the political whims of Ministers of Education in successive governments and thus the usual lack of consistency as "new" Languages policies come and go. These "waves" relate to curriculum methodologies, duration of courses and to the types and numbers of Languages to be offered. The Asian v. European dilemma continues to be a thorny issue which in my opinion lacks credibility whenever a "one or the other" approach is mooted. Both have validity and a real place in any curriculum.

Having been involved in Languages teaching for over 20 years, mostly in independent schools, and having been in contact with teachers in schools in countries where my "target" Languages are spoken as the native tongue, it is clear that Australia has a lower understanding of the importance of Languages to the young than other nations. This needs to be reversed in the longer term. Governments in Europe and Asia have long understood that knowledge of English aids the National Wealth of the country. We should do the same, even if parents cannot see this connection. Those parents who do see the connection make great efforts to ensure their children obtain quality Languages training if at all possible. Those parents who have no wish to or cannot afford private school education for their children should not be disadvantaged by narrow-minded policies of Australian state governments.

I will be happy to be contacted (Contact details supplied)


 **73** This year our Year 8 program was cut by one 35 minute lesson a week. This has had a huge impact on what I can teach students. Seeing students once a week for 70 mins is not enough time to teach them. I have had to cut a lot out of my program and then this has implications for future year.

For Year 9 and 10 - I have 2 70 min lessons a week, in the past I have had an extra 35 mins. This has impacted greatly on Year 11 and 12.

To strengthen languages in schools, teachers need regular and frequent lessons.

Another issue is the small retention rates in Languages. I feel that part of the problem is timetabling - sometimes students want to continue but cannot as there are subjects on the same line as a language that they want to continue with.


(Contact details supplied)

 **74** The partnerships between Languages teachers and administration members & the Languages teacher and other staff members are both critical to success of a Languages program & outcomes for the children.

Languages teachers often need to work harder than their colleagues in order to gain their respect & support as the curriculum area is not fully understood, sometimes seen as a threat and some educators have had poor previous experiences with Languages programs.

The same is often true of relationships with parents but nothing breeds success like success - creating a high profile for Languages, creating public events and successes for children and building links to other curriculum areas/learning all helps to build strong foundations for a Language program. More than any other curriculum area I can think of, the success or failure of a program hinges on the Languages teacher and his/her approach, dedication, energy, personal interactions and enthusiasm. Sadly success that takes a long time to build can be destroyed in the blink of an eye.

Language proficiency of teachers is currently less of an issue in Qld than in some other states because of the Language Proficiency Interview but general teaching/interaction skills remain a bugbear in some cases.


 **75** In response to the dilemma of special needs students in my primary school learning LOTE, I have many thoughts as to how this could be addressed.

I feel quite strongly that there are a number - perhaps 5 per class in my low socio-economic area school - who are totally wasting their time in my class. These students would be much better off in a literacy class at this time, improving their skills with a highly committed teacher/teacher aide. There are also a further 5 or so in each class who choose not to behave in class because of low literacy levels, low self-esteem or just plain obstinacy. It would please me very much to see this 10-per-class given the choice of LOTE or literacy. I'm not suggesting that all special needs children should be exempted, just those whose time is patently being wasted; and a number of the other 5 may choose LOTE over literacy providing their behaviour and

effort remains acceptable - if not they are out and into grammar class. Perhaps from time to time when there is a purely cultural lesson, say a video, all students could attend.

This idea would benefit all students at the school. Those who are gaining nothing by being in class can have their needs met elsewhere, and those who choose to misbehave can decide (once, say after one month of regular LOTE class) where they would rather be. The remaining 3/4 or so of the class could work with the teacher much more productively and we could make real gains in language learning, and not have to waste considerable class time on behaviour management. This would involve being able to pitch the level of language somewhat higher than otherwise, keeping motivated and bright students interested and challenged. Many many good LOTE students in my classes become quickly bored and their initial enthusiasm for LOTE lessons often wanes because of constant disruptions: they frequently complain to me about the choices other students make in my classes.

I understand the issue of LOTE providing non-contact time in Queensland primary schools impacts on such suggestions, as does funding. But I would feel excited by the prospect of providing lessons which are more challenging both to me and the students and these would be far less stressful for us all, including the administration staff who often have to deal with behaviour issues emanating from LOTE lessons. Were staff and funding adaptable, I believe I could get the above to work well in my school.

 **76** I have been teaching Japanese through Virtual Schooling Service (VSS). The VSS is available to SS/SHS (yr9-12) in QLD and it is the initiative of Education Queensland. The VSS Japanese classes are available to any small cohorts or individual students wanting to continue their study of Japanese.


We offer a great service to the EQ schools which cannot offer Japanese due to staff/number/political etc reasons. Yet, we are not well known in QLD. We would love to help other EQ schools who are willing to continue language but EQ restrict our budget and teacher number.

I believe that Language in schools can be strengthened if external help/study like Virtual Schooling Service is known to the school and parents. But somewhat, EQ is not very keen about expanding or telling about the VSS so much.

For more details, please go to this page:
<http://education.qld.gov.au/learningplace/vss/>


The Virtual Schooling Service Japanese classes (Years 9 – 12) are available to any small cohorts or individual students wanting to continue their study of Japanese. The service consists of 2 x 50 minute phone and data conferences a week + access to the online materials from BlackBoard


<http://elearn.eq.edu.au/> .The advantage of this is the greater amount of teacher input and guidance – and the chance to regularly use and listen to Japanese in context.


 77 As a LOTE teacher and from my experiences, I found that at primary school LOTE teachers (as a specialist teacher) are recognised as "NON-CONTACT TIME TEACHER" for classroom teacher rather than LOTE teacher. Therefore often behaviour problems have been one of the issues in LOTE lesson.

As more than a few LOTE teachers are teaching at more than one school, it is very hard to deal with these issues by themselves because of the timetable and other reasons, such as there is no time to do catch up with students to discuss issues after lessons or talk to classroom teachers to have some information and support. Please do not misunderstand my notion, there are so many primary school teachers who are so supportive and corroborate with LOTE teachers to organise unit or lessons. Because of this, I know that there are more than a few teachers decided to take other subject or back to be classroom teacher. I feel that it is very sad.

I am not sure whether my opinion explain the answers, my apology if misunderstand this section.
(Contact details supplied)


 78 Languages study needs more funds and more support. In Queensland, we are looking at going to schools opting in or out, which I believe threatens the consistency of language programmes. I believe that all students should have an opportunity to study another language during their schooling years and that it can only happen when we have support from our schools and the funds to buy decent resources to assist our programme.

 79 For students that have difficulty in learning English, those who would benefit from extra English classes should be given the opportunity to, as these people would probably excel more at this time. This includes those who have been ascertained or identified as having a learning difficulty. If this was to happen, behaviour would be slightly better in some schools, as those students would not be disrupting as much because they have no idea about what is happening in the language classroom.

 80 The study of Languages is not something that fits comfortably into the curriculum for many people, and that is why it is seen as expendable within the curriculum.


In many instances, support is mercurial as it depends upon the Principal and leadership team in charge. Parents are also very influential as they can greatly influence their children with the subject decision making process. This seems to be because the perception of irrelevance of Languages within the community and that English will be enough. It is not until later in life former students become aware of the value of Languages.

What needs to happen, along with the funding, is the "marketing" of Languages to the community. The world in which we live needs Languages and we should not be scared of "those foreigners" and "they are always talking about us", or "planning to attack Australia". Languages leads to better understanding and ability to be more critical of the information that surrounds us in our daily life. It is a double edged sword. Learn Languages to better understand the world but there is a fear of knowing about others. (Contact details supplied)

 **81** Teacher proficiency would be expanded and cultural awareness heightened with the availability of scholarships to the country of language (ie Italia)

Reasonable in school budgets are needed to help resource language studies.

European languages need to be recognised as beneficial and an equality shared with Asian languages in relation to society beliefs about there usefulness.

 **82** Despite every effort to make my languages classes interesting and effective, modifying them with new procedures and resources, and along with ICT input, over many years, and against the background of a partnership with a school in France, I keep coming back to the position that it is a soul-destroying occupation. The central problem is the one of having to include 'unwilling conscripts' in the company of the other students, who, neutral or positive towards languages, have to endure lesson after lesson of disruptive and negative behaviour.

In fact I would go so far as to say that the model under which I teach is having the adverse effect, of turning the good and promising students off languages. Having put this point to a meeting of languages teachers recently, I learned that gifted high school students were walking away from languages anyway, given the academic challenge, perceived lack of relevance and low status associated with languages.

I believe that Languages in schools will only be strengthened when there is a sufficient enough rise in the value placed on them by the Nation as a whole, from the Prime Minister, through to the teacher and parent who is prepared to accept more time allocated to languages teaching in the lower primary

grades, with follow-up provided for all interested students through schools of excellence such as those which exist to accommodate the gifted and talented in sports.

✍ 83 It is very difficult to convince students to study a language at my school. This is for two reasons. Firstly, numbers in both German and Japanese have been decreasing steadily since the College introduced a Middle School where LOTE is compulsory in Yrs 6-8. After 3 years, they have had enough and to be honest, have in many cases not learnt very much. This is not due to poor quality teaching but to the poor attitude of most students and their parents. They and their parents do not see any value in learning a language and as many say "it will not get me a job". Some parents think it is okay for their child to "fail" LOTE as long as they don't misbehave in class. The second issue is that the school has steadily increased the subject offerings and students see many of these as exciting, hands on and "useful" ie get me a job.

I also find it frustrating that there are few activities in QLD for LOTE students to attend. It appears that there are far more in Vic and NSW. In QLD, there are a few events for the primary students but virtually nothing for the high school students. Such events should be on offer and should be of high quality if you are to impress the modern teenager. Students need to see the language in use by others outside the College and need to see that Australians value the language. The opposite is very much the case.

✍ 84 LOTE taught in Primary Schools has at times in my experience had a negative effect on students I meet as they arrive in my secondary school classes. As the subject has not been given adequate time or resources, and primary school LOTE teachers are often put under strain working across a number of schools, students have not enjoyed or engaged with the subject. They arrive with a negative attitude which can be difficult to overcome, to 'win students back' to the subject. A valuable opportunity for students to learn a second language at an ideal age is wasted, as resourcing is often inadequate and the LOTE lesson is often seen as nothing more than non-contact time for the classroom teacher. These attitudes are passed on to students, again impacting negatively on their involvement with languages and other cultures.

Students themselves often realise the enormous benefits and joys to be derived from language study, especially when they have the chance to travel and see first hand the culture and the need to communicate! We need to overcome the 'isolationist' attitude we have as an island nation and see how wonderful interaction with the rest of the world is! (How, I don't know.)

What a wonderful thing it would be though, to see attitudes in our schools and communities change and for people to realise the benefits - both intellectual and in terms of cultural awareness and understanding - of language teaching and learning. Then we might see language education given the appropriate resourcing, in terms of both money and time, across primary, secondary and even tertiary education.

OK, that is my rant over and done with! Thanks.

 **85** Parents attitude towards language learning

- One of the major contributing factors for students' failure to continue their language studies is parents' lack of support as language is seen as less important and irrelevant for their children's future career.


- We also need positive input from the industry - requiring language for a specific job or that "must speak another language" as a required entry into the industry.

- Subsidised Educational trip to targets language

- Media industry:


- Free publicity promoting languages on a regular basis

- Language competition and recognition for outstanding language venture and contribution, for both teachers and students

 **86** Continuity from primary to secondary is paramount if students are to study language at primary. Due to quality/disparity amongst primary language teachers, course content varies greatly - some focus primarily on language while others focus on culture - This creates a huge array of backgrounds when students merge for Secondary schooling. Repetition of topics from primary to secondary is also an issue. Whilst primary school's cover some topics, secondary schools tend to do so in more depth. These disparities create frustration amongst students. They feel they have 'done' topics and therefore become disinterested. Also, when games and culture are a focus at the primary level, some students find the transition to 'work' difficult and the complaint is often - Language used to be fun...

Further, the current trend of some schools to introduce Middle Schooling has also meant that Languages are not included in the 'Core' subjects (Maths, English, Science, SOSE, Multi-media). Languages are therefore pitted against semester long unitised elective subjects which are aimed at capturing the market of 13-14 year olds, and in which students are not accountable for their efforts past that said semester. Language is a subject that can be very

enjoyable, but inevitably also requires focus and discipline in terms of study. It can be considered an unappealing option when backed up against many of the other electives offered at our school. Also, the decision of our school to maintain our year-long language programmes means that students 'lose' their second elective choice (two semester electives per year). Many students comment that they don't want to miss out on the 'fun' subjects by choosing to continue with their Language studies. Our Language department is working towards addressing these issues. Traditionally we have a high retention rate of students in languages (around 30% of year 12s studying a second language each year), but this has been sliding recently, and we are not content to match the national average.

 **87** re #178. I have not been able to teach my LOTE in high school since 1990 as I was sent to a school that did not have it. The two languages taught at my school were reduced to one because no staff could be found and the Bali bombs went off. (Indonesian was therefore cancelled)

There is one tiny (9) senior German class left in my school. There are several trained LOTE teachers on staff in a variety of languages but we have been actively discouraged from forming another language class.


LOTE is taught in yr 8 for 1 term, and then it can be picked up for a semester in yr 9 and 2 semesters in year 10. No wonder there are so few students. There is no continuity. The LOTE teachers are part-time, through choice and lack of language classes and are very demoralised.

There used to be a Head of Department for LOTE but it was bundled into English when the KLA's reduced the subject areas to eighths. The Arts also suffered here.

It is sad to see the decline of other language learning. I have been teaching since 1978 and have seen the numbers decline from nearly 100% (it used to be compulsory to have another language to matriculate to university) to what I have read in union newspaper...LOTE in QLD is down to 7%

LOTEs help so much in other areas such as art, history, cultural awareness, truly understanding (eventually) another culture...visiting other countries helps students to understand just how difficult it is for NESB people who sacrifice their language and culture to move to Australia...an empathy which is patently lacking in many of the students I teach.

I became aware of the Federal Language stuff through my own curiosity...no mention has been made of these or the Access Asia initiatives through the curriculum committee at my school. I attend every meeting and make it my business to pass on this info to my astonished colleagues. Thanks for this opportunity.

 **88** In Queensland one of the main problems is that LOTE is for non contact time and so many classes see it as the time when the REAL teacher goes and the BABY SITTER is there, hence so many behaviour issues.

In schools in a lower socio-economic area the real work of language learning is not considered to be real work by many students, they see busy work and written work as serious work. They have learnt this through their years at school in these very tough classrooms where many students have social, emotional and health issues. The early stages of language learning involve lots of listening, repetition and guided oral practice. And it is this very work which is all too often eschewed in LOTE classes in order to manage student behaviour in the "non-contact time". Hence many students' LOTE lessons might keep them "happy" but deny them the opportunity to actually develop any real level of fluency.

The lack of contact time is very important: 4 to 5 half lessons a week for 1 or 2 years is a minimum for the majority of students to achieve a level of critical fluency which is vital for them to see the point of continuing.

✍ 89 I believe that students should not be forced to study a language in high school if they really don't want to. It negatively affects the classroom environment.

✍ 90 The point of a language class is to get children speaking the language - time allocation and class size have a direct bearing on this. I would be prepared to halve my time allocation across two smaller groups to facilitate this and improve the students' outcomes. It also gives less confident children more of a chance to engage in the lesson. This is not generally acceptable to other teachers.

✍ 91 ICTs are very important however the money is not provided and am I able to ensure that basic reading and writing of Japanese on computer is available for my students. They do a lot of their research and reading online at home because the school computers are not able to be installed with the necessary font capabilities etc.

The school IT guy - a very young man who is not paid very much can't seem to work out how to install the new XP software so that it displays Japanese. Frustratingly it was legible on the outdated windows software.

Other important considerations include outcomes. It is true that a small percentage of students continue studying Japanese onto Yr 12 at our school - less than 10%. However those who do achieve high standards and go on to further their studies at a tertiary level.

There is room for specialist programs such as immersion programs (even in Japanese) from the Yr 8 level up.

It is more effective to allow the year 8 and up students to elect the subject and then give them a couple of years grounding in the basics.

High schools in large metropolitan centres should be offering immersion programs to suitably able applicants drawn from the dozens of primary schools where the basic reading and writing skills had been established in Years 6 & 7.

After Year 10 there should be core and extension courses offered because some students (returnees, background speakers etc are not being catered for and the country is not facilitating the maintenance and development of their skills.

Universities do not seem capable of recognizing these competent types. Although it is possible for a child who is adept at mathematics, for example to proceed to University earlier than his or her average peers, this type of accelerated learning is not offered to students who display competence in a language.

I think it is our duty as educators to lobby for this group and have their needs recognized. It would seem foolish to be working so hard to promote languages only as 'foreign' languages and not recognize the background speakers who struggle to maintain all their skills and are given no formal help from educational authorities. (reading writing, speaking and listening.)

In a nutshell we need more specialized programs, more ability to elect the subject after primary school.

We need more funding not only being allocated but being actually passed onto the respective language departments.

We need more staff in language departments and a consideration that language teachers need to spend a lot of spare time promoting their language and developing curriculum.

As such timetabling should reflect the amount to preparation time required to adequately design and instigate effective, Units of Work.

Thought should also be given about providing national scholarships for excellent students of Japanese

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- ✍ 92 1- Language should be compulsory from primary to high school.
2- Minister of education should understand the importance of Languages in our lives and in our future.
3- More resources should be available for teachers including teachers aid
4- Overseas studies during Holidays should be more available for everyone and should not be Mr. Roger White decision.

✍ 93 I really want to know how Australian LOTE education is implemented/improved from now on because the trend of language education seems to be diminished. I have been teaching Japanese in Qld. for 18 years and have worried about it.

✍ 94 I have taught LOTE at my school for 16 years and I do love it. The students have been, in the past, well behaved and eager to learn. However, I have noticed a change in the community. Students find it too hard learning a LOTE and prefer studying practical subjects. English is widely spoken around the world and students do not see learning a LOTE as relevant anymore. The more capable students tend to leave the subject to study Mathematics C, Chemistry or Physics, which is seen as necessary to get into a good University.

As part of my job I am constantly trying to "sell" my subject and at times run out of ideas. It would be great to use ICT as part of the curriculum, however I have not come across any really useful software. I tend to use web pages on the Internet.

At this stage the number of students learning a LOTE at my school is still high, but the future does worry me. Most people in Europe are bilingual or even trilingual, which makes us Aussies look bad. It would be nice for the Australian public to be aware of the many benefits learning a LOTE brings.

✍ 95 Languages in schools could be strengthened through giving up to present languages as easy subjects. They are hard, complex, and, yes, sometimes boring subjects, but they are full of satisfaction whenever the student has overcome the initial difficulties. The more languages a person learns the better this person understands the domestic and the global issues, because learning LOTEs is training parts of the brain that would not be exploited otherwise (as brain research shows). This training helps with English, problem solving, and understanding complex situations. Parents have to be convinced that learning a LOTE is not time wasted, though it does not offer the student an instant award. Parents and students have to be convinced that English only is not enough, because many people speak English with but add on their cultural background. And this cultural background cannot be understood without LOTE and being used to read the cultural backgrounds from many different people.

✍ 96 I think there is a huge gap between policy and practice when it comes to implementation of Languages education in schools. For this to improve it is essential that principals and deputy principals are more knowledgeable about policy and what is actually going on in the school (practice). They need to be more proactive in this area. Principals and Deputies need to be supported in this endeavor by their districts/regions with the provision of PD. It is generally left up to the LOTE teacher alone to manage without assistance or support. This becomes even more challenging when the LOTE teacher is servicing 3 or 4 schools in a circuit. Further, the itinerant nature of the LOTE teachers' role makes it near impossible to plan with a large number of classroom teachers to create language learning more meaningful for students

through the creation of cross-curricula links. When this happens it is only due to the individual classroom teachers choice by them giving up their own time to plan with the LOTE teacher. Planning time for classroom teachers excludes LOTE teachers.

✍ 97 In relation to Q.177, I believe special needs students should be given 'support' in language lessons as much as they are in other areas of study. If this is not possible, then special needs students should be catered specially within a LOTE teacher's timetable by streaming. Small groups of special needs kids together would help them I believe to feel important as their needs can be most effectively met. During language classes, they could then follow-up on simple activities/games with assigned 'peer tutors'.

Often, they need support in 'getting organised' and cultivating a 'work ethos'. Building their 'self-esteem' is also often a great need. They are as much in need and have as much to gain in seeing the 'bigger picture' of the world they live in as any other student.

Q.173 I have felt personally an increased amount of stress relating to doing my job (the mechanics of the planning, etc). I feel that in the 1 year Dip Ed, although we were exposed to 2 sessions of teaching prac, the development of planning, assessing and reporting skills (so crucial to any teacher's job) was somewhat stilted, in my view. I remember (it was 14 years ago for me - and I since had 7 years off to have my family) spending most of my first prac observing lessons and teaching a few; being up most (if not all) of the night preparing before a day's teaching and feeling incredibly 'burnt out' at the end of my second prac, to the extent that I would have failed my course, had it not been for the kind 'extension' granted to me by one of my lecturers on compassionate grounds for a final (very large) assignment. I went into teaching thinking that 'all-nighters' were an OK way to get things done (and they got done in the end). At the age of 41, and with 4 kids, I'm not so sure that I was properly prepared. I had some limited mentoring and I remember having my deputy 'check' my lesson plans, but not much else by way of 'guidance' on how to get it right. How to manage your time and how to 'refine' the planning process so that it is not a nightmare that leaves your stomach in knots!!! Every time!!! I don't know if 1 year diplomas are still available, but if they are, I believe they would need to be aligned in terms of teaching prac with what is offered in the full degree over a period.

Q.171 & Q 158 Limiting the availability of languages only perpetuates the myth that there is one (or maybe 2) important language(s)...Then the 'vocational' argument gets precedence (which is more useful). This should be the last argument that is considered. Not everyone who learns a language will use that language in later life (whether for travel or work purposes or other)...But all who learn a language can benefit (formatively) from the

experience it brings them of their own tongue and of the world we live in 'today'!!!

Q.146 BEFORE the students have 'made their minds up' on what's important in the world, the opportunity to whet their appetite for things 'linguistic and cultural at the same time', should be available from when they start school. A 15 minute lesson every week in Years 1 and 2 and building up to half an hour in year 3 would be the equivalent of an hour in one year. Getting the kids 'exposed' to LOTE and enthusiastic about LOTE in the early years, primes them for a positive experience in the upper school and helps them to 'form' their own (rather than inherit their parents') judgments about the experience. I LOOOOVE the contact I have with the younger years. Their enthusiasm is overwhelming at times and it carries over into the playground when they feel the inclination to 'practise' their French on 'Madame' by saying a confident 'Bonjour'...How this compares (sadly) to the upper school in the current situation where you are fighting a losing battle in the 'value of LOTE' stakes often (particularly if they've decided on their 'career path' and it definitely DOESN'T involve either being a teacher of language OR going to FRANCE*?)

Q.140 NETWORKING...What's that? I have been in my job (at my school - part-time) for 4 years now and have had very LITTLE contact with other French teachers in my cluster. this is a combination of a number of factors, including distance and availability of teachers juggling very full timetables).

Within a single school context, generally classroom teachers of a particular year level or in the same subject area will come together 'physically' over a coffee to discuss everything from student behaviour to programs, moderation of students' assessment, etc).


When we LOTE teachers have PFD's, I have found that more often than not school priorities preclude participation in LOTE workshops/conferences. I don't begrudge schools this as it IS important to know what is happening in your own school and to feel an important part of the staff.


However, as many LOTE teachers often work part-time in any one school, the 'logistics' of getting together teachers from within a cluster (both within primary and across primary-secondary) is almost impossible without a 'scheduled' time within normal school hours. People's after school commitments are many and varied (between their own schools' needs and their family commitments). I believe therefore that LOTE networking is seriously lacking. I don't consider email to be a 'satisfactory' way to keep in contact with colleagues for 'sharing'. And I don't believe that any school would seriously consider holding regular staff meetings or moderation or planning meetings via this mode of communication. At the very least, an amount of travel time should be scheduled into LOTE teachers' timetables to

enable them to meet with colleagues and to have what every other teaching colleague takes for granted.


Q.170 Non-English speakers are learning 2 new languages. They are not incapable of doing this. They just need support and time to 'get the hang' of it. They usually (in my experience) have caught up fine once they've found their feet in English.

Q.165 I am told by my principal that although expected to provide LOTE learning, funding was never provided to allow LOTE teachers to have a teaching classroom of their own (like music or Phys Ed - ovals/pools)...Why can't I have a classroom of my own where I can teach in the way that suits my students, for my subject, with my resources, in an atmosphere that promotes the learning that my students are doing? I ALWAYS feel like the add-on when it comes to resources for this ONE reason....and that's in a VERY SUPPORTIVE school. (I love the school I work at and get on very well with ALL the staff and admin...)

 **98** [Timetabling of subjects in opposition to LOTE. Often students are lured away to other subjects which may seem more appealing and are always on the same timetable line as LOTE](#)
[Example - multi-media, art drama, music etc](#)

 **99** One of the problematic issues for secondary level is the nature of the primary language learning experience. We offer beginning as well as continuing classes in Year 8, so that students who have never done the language before are not mixed in with students who studied at Primary level. Many schools either do not do this because of a philosophic belief (opposed to streaming?) or lack of resources. We have 3 lessons per week of 70 minutes duration, so the students do have an intensive experience even though it is for 1 semester only in Year 8. There is a second (for continuing students) and third (for high school beginning students) compulsory semester in Year 9.

(Contact details supplied)

 **100** [Languages in schools can be strengthened by](#)

- [increasing in-school support for Language teachers through equity in student/teacher contact time, budgets, in-service/professional development access, increased curriculum development opportunities.](#)
- [maintaining and strengthening Language teacher networks.](#)
- [maintaining opportunities for time in the country of the language.](#)
- [developing centres like the QLD LOTE centre at West End in regional areas.](#)
- [providing Language advisors and allowing time for school visits.](#)

✍ 101 As an overseas trained language teacher I am astonished how little future language teachers learn about language acquisition and other relevant theory and also methodologies at university. Their course very often only seems to focus on improving their competency in the chosen language. But speaking Japanese fluently does not make a good language teacher...

✍ 102 Given that the most powerful country in the world (U.S.A.) has nearly 40 million Spanish speakers and that there are 22 countries worldwide that speak Spanish, it is ridiculous that Spanish is under-represented in Australian schools.

Language teachers need a room to teach from, not only to hang up relevant posters etc, but to give Languages (and Language Teachers) the same amount of respect and consideration as other subject areas. Being constantly given the room that nobody else wants hardly holds the subject in high esteem.

Parents and the wider community appreciate being informed about the importance of languages education WHEN it can and is allowed to be done in the school community. (Contact details supplied)

✍ 103 I find it disturbing that the study of languages in my state is left to the choice of the student body, who generally will choose the "easier" subjects. A system that allows students as young as 13 to decide that the study of a major body of knowledge is not relevant to them is most ill-advised.


2. Though our country is rich in languages in terms of ethnic languages being spoken, and probably passed on to the younger generation, there needs to be maintained, the opportunity, through the state education system, for all students, including those who come from a "English only" backgrounds, to study a second language. The move toward community-based, ethnic schools may preclude many students of this opportunity.


3. We need to be realistic in our "assessment" procedures. Senior students care understandably concerned about their OP results. If our system continues to place true 2nd language learners in the same ranking system as native speakers, then one can not blame students for deciding not to continue their language studies into their senior years. It is all very well to assess students on a criteria based assessment system, but totally unjust to then rank them against native speakers in order to calculate their OP.


4. We need to be honest with students, about the level of commitment required to gain true proficiency in their language studies. Allowing students in Yr 8 & 9 to gain "good" marks on a less than rigorous work program is to the detriment of the language learning. We must be honest with students.


✍ **104** Languages in Schools can be strengthened by parents and administration firstly publicly advocating their support for and belief in the importance of language study for all students. Also, by acknowledging language teachers and the work they do. Schools should also review the time they allocate to language classes and the level at which they make study non-compulsory. In addition, schools should fund training, resources and teacher assistants in languages.


Queensland Principals said


 **1** Brain research tells us that children should be learning a second language between the ages of 3-13yrs. It is vital that when children enter primary school in their first year at school, they start learning a second language. Research also tells us that there is a correlation between 2nd language acquisition and Maths success.

 **2** Much effort needs to be put into the training of LOTE teachers, their co-ordination and ongoing support as professionals and the exploration of e-learning possibilities especially for remote areas.

 **3** The quality of language teaching at our school is very high. Through support of the LOTE program, we have been able to give language teaching a high status at the school. As a result, students and parents view LOTE as an important area of study that deserves effort. Our student outcomes are high. I have a strong belief that Administrators have to support LOTE teachers in their difficult but valuable job. Learning a language can make a difference to our society. We need KLAs like LOTE and The Arts as they contribute qualities to our students that may not be achieved through the other KLAs.

 **4** The quality of language teaching depends on the quality and dedication of the teacher. I am very fortunate to have 2 Japanese LOTE teachers who use games and food to involve the students in their language learning. Rather than just call it language, I would refer to it as cultural immersion rather than language learning.


 **5** The major issue with language learning in Australia is the question as to which one. Languages like Spanish although widely spoken in the world and migrant community are not taught in Queensland. The decision about 'character based language' as referred to in the survey needs to be what the course hopes to achieve. If it is to slow speaking and listening progress so that an insignificant level of literacy in script can be developed....


 **6** One of the historical concerns for teaching LOTE in primary school has been the availability of primary educators with sound effective pedagogy. When the pedagogy matches the learner there is a more significant enthusiasm by students for language learning. When resources support the LOTE


program there is also a higher acceptance and priority given to LOTE by the community.


As with Other KLAs when the resources and professional learning support the program the program becomes alive for young learners.

Language learning offers a gateway to the diverse cultural human family unlike any other program.


 **7** I believe that a Language should be funded in our schools throughout Australia from Prep to Year 7. Currently funding is scheduled for Years 6 and 7.

 **8** Its like all education - depends on the facilitator - if they are significant to the students then it is popular. If it is interestingly presented it is seen that way. Having unqualified language lectures (not trained teachers) is a weakness. Parents can assist in all areas.

 **9** This Primary school studies German as this is the only language offered at the High School to which our students will transition. We would prefer to study a culture more different to our own and most parents see Asian language as offering better opportunities for future employment. However, I believe there is a shortage of language teachers in this area.

 **10** Further developing resources will continue to increase the quality of the language teaching delivery.


It would be advantageous to increase the communication of how important learning non-English languages is in the real world of international business and for all of life learning and enrichment.


 **11** There is a large shortage of qualified LOTE teachers in our area. There are also too many languages and we should concentrate on one or two which would then flow on from primary to secondary school - we do not teach any language thoroughly. We also experience difficulty in giving students opportunity to practice what they learn in a practical manner.


 **12** Languages in schools can be strengthened if


- languages teaching will be compulsory from primary or preschool to high school;
- languages will receive a stronger appreciation in university enrollment;
- more native language teachers will be engaged;
- bilingual schools, immersion programme, schools exchange will be promoted.


(Contact details supplied)

 **13** Greenslopes State School has been able to offer language teaching from Preschool to Year 7 thanks to a productive partnership with Co.As.It. (Italian Welfare Organisation) who fund a large proportion of our program.

 **14** The main challenge for us is continuing to find suitable teachers for our two languages, Japanese and Italian. We get good results in both languages but we have had considerable trouble at times finding qualified teachers, when some of our teachers have been on leave. The lack of Italian at our local University makes our situation more difficult.


 **15** My experience, from working in other schools, leads me to believe that some schools do an excellent job with the delivery and instruction of LOTE. However, the school where I am currently based does not have a teacher who has acted professionally enough in this KLA. Therefore there are many behaviour issues and students have a negative attitude to learning LOTE. I believe that by employing better qualified teachers, the program would be received in a more positive manner. This would make all the difference in the achievement levels attained and the likelihood that students will go on to learn more about a culture and a language other than English. Thank you for the opportunity to do this survey.

 **16** The LOTE program needs better co-ordination across all levels of schooling. It should commence from prep-year 1 to be effective.

 **17** Most of the problems relate to students and parents who do not want to learn a language. Mostly this causes stress to all involved as the students have little respect for the teacher and their cultural background. Students see no relevance. If we are going to learn a language it needs to be introduced from year one. When teacher is ill the program does not continue as there are no replacements and it is difficult to get relief for non contact time for class teacher as it is limited time. Learning a Language can be advantageous for some students who have the ability to cope with this.




Queensland Languages Advisors said


 **1** Problems in language classes are often the result of insufficient support by school administrations. E.g. an itinerant primary teacher running between several schools is unable to follow through with discipline issues; a teacher without adequate classroom facilities cannot teach properly - no access to computers, no wall space to put visual stimulus, no equipment for the use of audio and visual material.

Language teachers have to justify their existence virtually every day in a way that teachers in other subjects do not.


Schools administrators increasingly openly talk of languages not being important.

Timetabling decisions kill the chances of a language surviving in a school much more often than an ineffective teacher.

 **2** I believe that languages education can only be strengthened if it is accorded the same status as English, Maths and Science and made compulsory in schools.


 **3** I am quite shocked that Indigenous languages were not included in this survey. Although some circumstances surrounding the teaching of Indigenous languages differ to those pertaining to overseas languages, they are nevertheless LOTEs of huge cultural value and enormous significance to most Indigenous Australians. It is a shame that they couldn't have been included.

I think there has been a general trend away from explicit language teaching methodologies over the past 20-30 years. I base this observation on my personal experiences of language learning in High School, my teaching a language at university level, my son's experiences of language at High School etc. In my opinion this has sometimes turned LOTEs into a somewhat fluffy subject as opposed to a rigorous, challenging academic and communicative pursuit. I don't think this has made LOTEs more popular. On the contrary, I think it's made them a tad ridiculous... most unfortunately.

 **4** At my school we have a national Japanese teacher who does her very best to make learning a difficult language as interesting as possible, however the behaviour and lack of interest on the part of many students makes both teaching and learning very hard. We currently have 2 x 45 minute LOTE

lessons per week but only on 30 minute physical education lesson; I think there needs to be some major changes given the huge obesity problems we have and the fact that many students struggle with basic English and the conventions of English as a language. To me, it would make much more sense to have 2 x 45 minute physical education lessons (1x theory and 1 x practical) and have 1 LOTE lesson. For LOTE to be more successful there needs to be more consistency; transient students who attend 2 or 3 school might be experiencing 2 or 3 different languages. How can we expect students to understand and learn a language if that's the case? With so many regional variations to many languages, particularly Asian languages, what use is learning Japanese anyway?

Students would learn and understand much more about a culture if the WHOLE culture was explored not just the language. What about food, clothes/costumes, religions, religious beliefs and traditions?


 **5** I believe that the language education system in Australia can be improved significantly. I have worked abroad for several years in the Japanese Government (in an Education role). I speak both Japanese and Korean. I have a general understanding of Mandarin. Whilst living and working abroad, I have come to learn about other countries' approaches to Language learning.

As a speaker of other languages, one of the most disappointing things for me is that I feel that my skills are not valued as highly as other skills in Australia. While overseas, I felt that people valued my language skills.

I believe that greater funding will help to improve the situation for Australian language learners. The funding would help to provide greater opportunities for students to be stimulated and encouraged in the field of LOTE. Also, schools could make good use of opportunities to link up with local community groups. I get the feeling that these types of opportunities are currently being overlooked in most cities.

More hands on opportunities would provide students with evidence of the value of language learning. Studying from a text book is one thing, but being able to use the language to communicate and understand other people in culture, provides hard evidence that study pays off.

I would be happy to be contacted for further information I am very interested in this field of research and am willing to help out in any small way.
(Contact details supplied)

 **6** In my experience of learning and teaching language, I cannot stress enough that the younger the students are the better. The language learning

part of the brain all but closes down at the age of 12 for most people. It would seem to make so much more sense to start language learning from year 1 in an immersion program.

Teaching another language and using English to explain or translate the language is the second big mistake in the system. This inhibits learning greatly. It might not be so much of a problem if students were taught English grammar (another huge blunder!!), but the students have no paradigm in which to fit their English knowledge let alone another language.

The system really needs an overhaul with respect to the way language is taught, the age LOTE starts at, and the attitudes of lazy arrogant English speakers. There needs to be much better education in society about the importance of speaking other languages because, contrary to popular belief, not everybody in the world can or wants to speak English!!


✍ 7 I am concerned that in this part of Australia [Nth. Qld] we seem to persist in providing secondary studies in French and German. By now we should be concentrating on the languages of our nearest international neighbours. This year my daughter had to attend night school in order to complete her year 12 Indonesian studies. Her high school cut Indonesian from its' language program and Distance Ed did not offer the course by correspondence. It seems that a lack of suitably qualified and willing teachers was blamed for this change. There are students ready to learn so I believe the challenge is to find good teachers.


✍ 8 We need a serious commitment for Governments and practical plan which limits or controls the first language other than English taught as core in schools to ensure continuity. We need to overcome "the world speaks English" mentality which is a cop out.

✍ 9 Language learning is a life long adventure that opens the doors to the world. It goes further than proficiency in the language and involves learners in discovering new thoughts and behaviours, the rich variety of world cultures and how they are expressed through languages. The foreign language that one learns is only one step into this rich variety of the real world.

In Australia, like in most English speaking countries, it is difficult to counteract the "us = speakers of English" and "them = speakers of other languages" phenomenon. Learning a linguaculture is like getting to a look-out and discovering that there is much more to see, to experience, to learn from than the enclosed world we used to live in.

Language learning like any other school subject depends on the quality of the experience provided. The ideal teacher primary focus will be the student and his/her intellectual, cognitive and affective development. The teacher will target deep learning within most lessons/activities/tasks. I strongly believe students have the ability to value learning experiences and tell apart what is superficial and irrelevant from what is essential.

 **10** The issue of availability of quality language teaching staff in all areas of the state is a major one. Continuity of staff is a follow on from this.

 **11** It seems cross cultural understandings are necessary when learning a language. Teachers who fluently speak the language or have lived in other countries, I would think, are able to resource more than just books when teaching a foreign language and would be able to inspire REAL and fuller learning experiences.

 **12** LOTE teachers are often subjected to harassment, physical and verbal abuse.

The LOTE teacher is usually in tears or ready for a breakdown at the end of each session.

The students' parents/grandparents etc pass on many deep feelings related to Australia's participation in World Wars etc. There is a particular hatred shown towards Asian LOTE teachers. I get a feeling that the students feel that it is their duty to terrorise the LOTE teacher.

The regular classroom primary teachers are hesitant to leave them alone with their classes as the LOTE teachers usually have very poor management skills by comparison and when the class teachers return to their classes they find that they have to pull the classes back into line. This takes time away from teaching.

Queensland Tertiary Language Teachers said

✍ 1 I am concerned at the widening gap between the quality of language programs in Catholic and Independent schools and that of the State Education system. This is not necessarily due to the quality of the teachers as there are many competent and committed teachers in State schools. The environment in which they work and the lack of support from the 'system' and their school communities can help explain the small number of language students at Senior level in those schools. I am afraid we might be going back to the bad old days when only privileged young people were encouraged to study languages. Given the career opportunities now available to students with foreign language skills it could have long term consequences.

✍ 2 I am not an English speaker and I have a different experience of learning languages in my country. In Australia I LIKE A LOT THE METHODOLOGY (for example Task Based Methodology) it is interesting and encouraging. Unfortunately, this method works well only for students who are interested in learning language. But, this is EXTREMELY DIFFICULT to learn other language; it requires discipline, patience, responsibility and ... a very strong encouragement. Children and adolescents very often just don't want to learn, don't like this challenge or they just don't believe in importance of being multilingual. They need an encouragement for motivation, but also a "stick". This is why I believe making language a compulsory subject would be very beneficial at the long term. (It is a really broad topic. Please see the current policy in England which stopped making language a compulsory subject at school. Result - a big drop of students taking language classes. And English people have already a reputation of not having multilingual skills). Here are some observations/ suggestions based on the system which was implemented in my country:

- > Systematically review the program
 - > Try to establish more interstate cooperation between teachers (unification of the program)
 - > Set up the same national test for all students (which could be officially recognised)
 - > Try to show the importance of learning language to the young generation (from different points of view:
 - a) enhancement of future career (at national and international level)
 - b) Intellectual development
 - c) National security
 - d) International status of Australiaother???)
-

✍ 3 The MCEETYA Statement and National Plan for LOTE is fine as far as it goes, but it goes nowhere near what is needed in terms of language teaching and learning. Resourcing appears to be left strictly to the States -- where is the Commonwealth? National funds are being put into ICT resources downloadable by all teachers, but research indicates -- at least in LOTE -- the quality of these resources often leaves a lot to be desired.

What is needed, as several major commissioned national reviews have stated: Australia as a whole needs a vibrant and well resourced languages policy, which we have not had since the demise of the 1991 language policy.

There are many more issues related one could discuss, but that will do for now.

✍ 4 Regarding the statements above, some responses 'depend on' the circumstances. For example, discipline in primary LOTE Programs where LOTE is treated as no more than a fill-in for the 'normal' classroom teacher's relief time OR where the Languages teacher is itinerant and not viewed as a part of the school, is less effective. High school teachers are a permanent part of the school environment and can be a part of on-going discipline, so it should be more effective.


The second 'depend on' regards all comments above about learning outcomes. The learning outcomes depend on the quality and focus of teaching programs and practices. For example, students can learn more about English if this is a part of the pedagogical practice; students are stimulated if there is quality of teaching.


The third is about the relevance of Languages in a school - it depends a lot on the actual attitude of the principal, then the school, then the community (e.g. parents). If the attitude of the principal is negative or non-existent, then the attitude towards Languages and the Languages teacher will tend to follow suit.


STRENGTHENING LANGUAGES IN SCHOOLS

1. Principals are promoted based on some aspect of the Languages program. e.g. having one, promoting languages, support for LOTE teachers. All principals to do in-country language training with a focus on what you can do and know in a LOTE that you can't do and know in English. Something from a very different cultural background (e.g. Asian, African) could help - Indonesia is closer and cheaper! All principals to have basic spoken ability.
2. LOTE teacher training receives some kind of bonus, dependant also on quality of learning teachers' grades. In-service teachers have opportunity biannual Languages proficiency in-service in country (for ALL languages, including Indonesian).

3. ALL LOTES have equal status (e.g. Indonesian students can visit Indonesian; teachers of Indonesian can have training in Indonesia)
 4. LOTE timetabling must promote LOTE, e.g. 1/2 a year of LOTE in grade 8 is not good enough; LOTE compulsory to grade 10; HOD positions in ALL high schools; LOTE to mix more with content teaching (e.g. be able to do social studies using the LOTE or art or sport - cover two subjects in one go).
 5. Grade 12 students must have LOTE to matriculate OR get bonus marks for tertiary entrance if they achieve a 'sound' achievement.
 6. Teachers coming out of tertiary institutions to have passed two years of tertiary Languages study ie intermediate proficiency. Universities to have compulsory language study, or at least a bonus for those students who do a Language (I don't think uni staff could cope!!). Universities to be paid for SMALL class sizes (under 25) for Languages.
 7. Community awareness programs about how useful a language is USING examples from other languages. For kids: make it hip and fun to speak with friends in another LOTE.
- There are lots of ideas for you.
-

 **5** As a PhD student in Indonesian Studies who started learning Indonesian in Grade 6 in a rural area, I've witnessed the complete lack of support given to various Indonesian teachers during my years of schooling. Sadly, not much changed when I entered university. Despite the fact that Indonesian is constantly being identified as one of the key languages for our region, very few students undertake Indonesian studies. This is, of course, in part due to the unpopularity of Indonesia over the past few years but it is also due to what I see as a very unsupportive attitude on the part of many principals (my old high school principal being no exception), parents and, in particular, the Department. Not happy.

 **6** Australia is a multicultural country and therefore a multilingual country. Current attempts by both major parties to stress the importance of English for citizenship purposes ignores the fact that Australia is both multicultural and multilingual and that Australia cannot hope to maintain good intercultural relations with other countries unless it respects those countries enough to communicate in languages other than English as well as fostering intercultural sensibility.


 **7** 1. State Education Depts do not appear to keep university language departments in the information loop.
2. Many teachers have poor mastery of LOTE content and appear to feel threatened by or sometimes even resent university attempts to identify and rectify this problem.

3. In my university, LOTE content instruction has been sacrificed to provide for more methodology/ philosophical subjects.
 4. University managers have almost no knowledge of what language teaching involves except that they believe it is unreasonably expensive.
 5. School and university teaching of LOTEs is doomed to be limited because so few hours are spent on the enterprise, and the timetables with higgledy-piggledy scheduling are not very supportive. Why not have initial or occasional "bursts" such as intensive language courses - e.g. one week of intensive language teaching - to get students really focused?
-


 **8** I do believe that studying a LOTE will benefit children later in life.

In my view, the teaching of foreign languages in schools, can be strengthened by employing teachers who were born in that country, speak the language fluently and know the culture.

(Contact details supplied)

 **9** This is a very complex issue in Australian society. We will never have high quality language teaching generally in schools unless the various governments commit to a long-term, ie at least 15-20 years, programme for the education of a sufficient supply of language teachers. In my case, the training to get me to a level sufficient to teach effectively took 4 years in secondary school, 5 years at university and 1 year in the country of my target language, ie 10 years!!! Language learning is a long-term thing. Unless Australian authorities do something to properly support language teaching programs at all levels, primary, secondary AND tertiary, Australia will lose long-term in areas like trade and international relations, but also in terms of having a society educated for the world of the 21st century. I am at the end of a long career in language teaching and it is depressing to see that in Queensland, languages education is still struggling for an accepted position as an important and key learning area. University languages programs are being killed by the economic rationalist, corporatist culture that has been forced on institutions by the present federal government. I really believe that support for language teaching in schools should come from 'above' (government, policy makers, etc). Only this support and recognition can give languages a 'status' equal to that of the other subjects.

(Contact details supplied)

 **10** One of the major impediments to good delivery and support of language teaching in Queensland comes from the government and its refusal to prioritise languages in any way shape or form. Indeed, they are even trying

to effectively reduce participation in languages by high school students despite the fact that Qld has the lowest participation rate in this area in the country already. It is a disgrace in a multicultural country such as ours that more priority is not given to languages.


✍ 11 All my experience in the last 10 years suggests languages in education are being valued less and less. In my tertiary institution funding cuts have seen drastic reductions in language course offerings, major rises in numbers in classes (when I did my very first tutoring job in the late 80s my supervising teacher apologised because I had 13 in a spoken Chinese tutorial group - it was too big for effective teaching in his view, now 15 years later a normal tutorial group contains 25-30 students). In addition because of the huge financial pressure on our language school, undergraduate programs which cater mainly to local students are being cut to further than the bone (key courses only offered in alternate years for example), while all the focus for new programs is on designing courses that will attract overseas full fee paying students - the whole aim is to make money to keep the rest of the school financially afloat - training the Australian population is not and for practical financial reasons cannot be part of the consideration. I am also witnessing the backslide as a parent of primary school children: In my children's primary school pressures on teaching staff have directly led to a reduction in the language offerings, so that whereas my older children learned Japanese from Year Four, my younger children will not have that opportunity until Year Six.

✍ 12 There are many questions above for which no general answer always applies, eg withdrawing special needs children; it must be a case by case basis. With regard to effectiveness of school programs, so much is contextual: how well trained and how motivated the individual teacher is, the support he/she receives from Principal and community, the resources available. There is often tension between teaching that is popular and teaching that demands high quality; an unpopular measure in politics (such as a tax, a toll, a dam or a ban on some product) may yet be extremely good for the country. So in schools, language teachers try hard to make children appreciate and enjoy languages and in so doing, can dilute real achievement and thus respect for the field.


There need to be solid approbation at all levels and solid recognition and rewards for languages achievement. There are massive cognitive gains from languages study which flow over into English literacy, cultural literacy and other disciplines. There is beneficial values education embedded in languages teaching but I question if the values of respect for difference, tolerance of ambiguity, anti-racism, critical thinking, are in line with what the current Commonwealth government calls "Australian values."

Languages can be STRENGTHENED by wholehearted endorsement at school level by school Principals, by constant messages in the public media about the value of languages from figures whom Australians respect, by regular effective in-service for languages teachers (with requirements for demonstrable proficiency gains by school students). Australia claims to be a sophisticated trading nation and a middle power in world affairs - yet are languages other than English mastered and used regularly by its business people, politicians, even diplomats, public servants, senior armed services and intelligence personnel, journalists, researchers? How many other languages does Alexander Downer speak? THE MODEL AT THE TOP counts! THE ATTITUDE at the top counts. The decisions of this monolingual (and monocultural) generation threaten to disempower the next generation of Australian born children as well.

(Contact details supplied)


 **13** * Languages education programs at university require support by the university. In particular a requirement that pre-service language teachers enrol in the full offer of language learning available in the university, as a content major. Typically the language component is for two years only out in a four year Bachelor degree accounting for only 4 credit points (to allow principles and practice in languages teaching to complete the 6 credit point major)


* Incentives for students to study languages at university with subsidised in country experience. In Europe and Britain teachers of languages are required to have at least one year in-country experience before teacher registration as a languages teacher is granted.

 **14** Learning another language is not just knowing words and grammatical rules. It is a necessary tool for understanding and respecting other people. That is most important especially in a multicultural society as Australia. If we don't pursue this, we cannot call us, we are living in a multicultural society.


Appendix 2E – SOUTH AUSTRALIA


South Australian Parents said

 1 I would be very interested in seeing AUSLAN studied as a LOTE. It is recognised as a language in it's own right & would enable Australian deaf/signing children to communicate with hearing children & would enable hearing children to be aware of the cultural differences within their own Australian culture. Profoundly deaf Australian children are disadvantaged within their own culture by a simple language barrier while our Australian hearing children are blithely being taught about languages & cultures they are unlikely to interact with in their lifetime. Profoundly deaf Australian children are unable to communicate with schoolmates if they are schooled in an Australian hearing/mainstream school, while a lone migrant schoolmate may strike it lucky & be able to communicate in their native tongue with their schoolmates. The chances of my children using AUSLAN are a LOT higher than the chances of them using German or Japanese - both in their youth and in their adult lives. Learning AUSLAN, I believe, would also be a greater advantage for my children as they move into employment than learning an Asian or European language. I think AUSLAN should be the compulsory language & other languages optional.
(Contact details supplied)

 2 This survey is biased toward getting answers which would help get more funding etc, so I am cynical about the use to which the results will be put.

The basic problem is that there are too many NESB language teachers who don't know how to teach. From a broad experience I can say this is a very common problem.

 3 As an employer, I find it most disappointing that many applicants have a poor understanding of English, especially in basic spelling and grammar. I believe it is more prudent to ensure our students are well versed in our own language before embarking on learning a new language simultaneously.

 4 I would like to see students, especially in the JP area have to use the language they are taught in the classroom during the class. Even if it is just the teacher greeting, toilet request etc. This would make the language much more real and easier to accept.

✍ 5 My children's school has just introduced Italian this year. My reception daughter has been learning this language but my year 3 daughter will not begin until next year. I am unsure as to why this is the case. To some extent language learning is subject to the same curriculum constraints and time limitations as 'the arts'. I wonder if this is because they are viewed as less important by schools?

✍ 6 As a child, I was taught 2 languages in school (in tandem) - one was English and the other was our national language - did not find it unusual or hard. I did it from kindergarten through to high school. In my 4th year in high school, till my second year in university, I learnt another language, Spanish.

On the issue whether there are enough language teachers - a solution to that is to train native speakers to be language teachers.

✍ 7 We live in a bilingual family. At school my children learn a third language which they enjoy. But in a primary school (and later) it comes down to the teacher. I believe that Australia lacks good educated language teachers and I also think that native speakers can bring so much more than their language to the class room.

I teach German at a kindergarten and the school for the German Language (preschool and reception class) and strongly believe that language learning should start earlier than primary school. Our programs have been very successful. The ability to learn a language is decreasing from 5 years of age ...

✍ 8 Languages could be strengthened in schools by having consistency with which languages are taught (eg of the 3 primary schools my son is zoned for they have 3 different languages German, Japanese and Indonesian).

Readily available support programs for teachers eg sister schools in other countries, work placement programs for teachers from countries that we are studying.

(Contact details supplied)

✍ 9 It would be ideal if parents of students with special needs e.g language/communication had the option of withdrawing their child (after consultation etc.) rather than manage the negativity that can result.


✍ 10 My children have Italian offered from Reception then in Year 6 and 7 they do a semester each of Italian and Chinese. After that they then choose. I


know the Chinese Teacher believes she's "missing out" because she doesn't get the children early enough.

I often wonder how much my children have actually learnt in the several years they've been learning Italian. They don't appear to really be able to carry on a conversation. My eldest who is 14 says she would be able to read it if it was on a piece of paper but really doesn't "remember" in order to have a conversation.


When I was at school languages were not officially taught in primary school, though I had a very progressive teacher who taught us some German and Italian and suggested to my parents that I should learn French and arranged for some books and records (that shows my age). At High School we got to choose between French and German. I tried to do both but unfortunately they were on the same timetable line as English, so only one could be chosen. I chose French and studied it for 4 years. I got good marks but left school believing I really couldn't speak the language. We'd done a lot of learning by rote, small conversations that repeated the basics. I did find however that on my first overseas trip 3½ years after high school I could get by with the basics and was the envy of others on my trip when I successfully purchased air mail stamps for Australia. I could probably still come up with some of the dialogue from our Year 8 books (from 1978).

I am however, very supportive of any language learning and would definitely encourage my children to continue as long as possible.
(Contact details supplied)

 **11** Most of our children's LOTE learning focuses on cultural matters (which is good) but they do not seem to learn a lot of grammar or vocabulary. This is a bit of a pity as they are just at the older edge of (I believe) the most receptive time to learn another language by immersion. I do not think that they could hold even a stilted conversation in their LOTE. Perhaps this is too much to expect from one lesson a week. More time per week would be good, but is probably difficult to resource as we are a public school trying to cover a lot of ground, eg arts, PE, music as well as the other, "core" curriculum items.

 **12** My responses pertain to my younger child who is still at primary school. I have no complaints about the language programme at his school. However I do have a problem with the programme offered (or not offered as is actually the case) at my daughter's high school. Too many students wished to study French in Year 9, but there was a cut-off point once the class was "full" so some of them were unable to continue with their language studies and there was very definitely no question of employing another teacher so that all who wished to could continue. No other solutions appeared to be

considered, or were certainly not discussed with me, so that was that. Protests elicited no response.
(Contact details supplied)


 **13** I believe that students should be taught more about different countries than being taught one language. It would make more sense to study a different country per term and parts of the language. Then students get a chance to experience all types of cultures and languages.

Why do schools have to continually have the same language for years and years. Students should have more choice and be offered a variety of languages. The school where my children go have been taught the same language (Indonesian) for the last 8 years that I can remember.

How about a change and try some thing different like French, German etc. I know the teacher there pushes for this language all the time, its not about what the students want its about her being able to keep her position at the school.


 **14** Give teachers who can speak another language a choice and support to be able to teach another language.


Languages are discussed and taught in isolation and in separation from other curriculum areas. As the survey suggests, cannot know about culture without knowing a language. But in reality, people learn a language through a number of cultural activities. Languages need to start thinking beyond the language square.....cultural activities are stimulators and also the carriers of languages. Get cultural experts (in the arts - music, visual, drama, dance) to work with language teachers...or become language teachers also.

 **15** Some of the questions are a bit open-ended. That is that I could have answered differently in some cases. My 4 youngest children all did German at high school. The eldest was taught German in primary school because they had a teacher who was fluent in German and trained to teach the subject. However when she left the school they were unable to get any language teacher at all so they tried to incorporate German studies in the school. My youngest daughter went on to study German and high school and won a study tour to Germany in Year 11 for 4 weeks (she was 1 of 3 who went from Australia). After Year 11 she did a Rotary exchange to Germany an is currently studying German, Politics, International Studies and Science at Adelaide University.

I believe that parent organisations support for language programs could improve the status of languages in the curriculum across Australia. I believe very strongly and have seen from my own kids' experience that another

language enhances their understanding of English. Even a small amount of exposure (i.e. only at either primary school or high school) enhances their development in all languages, including English. I realise and know from experience that it is difficult to get language teachers in the country areas, but I believe that where this is impossible there could be teacher sharing between schools and a language can be delivered electronically by distance education.


 **16** [A choice of languages would be nice.](#)
[Smaller schools might be able to accommodate this by pooling students.](#)

 **17** We are zoned to a school offering Japanese, Indonesian and French. Both my children chose French as a follow-on from their Primary School. There is no chance of us visiting Indonesia or Japan and I also think most Japanese in business would be able to speak English anyway. My children have found French to be an uninteresting language (plus difficult to spell!) although they enjoyed learning about France etc., and would have much preferred to study Italian or German. Consequently after a semester in Year 8 and having to do it all Year 9, they have both chosen to drop the subject. I don't think they speak it any better than when they first started apart from being able to say hello, please and thank you! A language club where the students could practice with native speakers might help, with interested local speakers coming in to help once a week or so.


I think the students and parents need to be consulted as to which languages should be offered as students will cope better than if they choose the best of a bad lot which is what my two have done.


Also, some language teachers do have difficulty with classroom control, mainly because of unmotivated and disruptive students. The language class is often perceived to be a soft lesson, one to relax in etc. There are usually no excursions to French Restaurants etc. (which would be interesting) because of behaviour management concerns.


Our High School does offer the occasional tour to Korea or Japan but none to Europe so there are no goals to strive for, even New Caledonia would be better than nothing! French has a very low profile as there are more International Students from and Japan and China in the school.

 **18** [I think languages must start when the child starts school and that there should be more than one choice of languages and that it should be incorporated into the curriculum where possible so that even normal class teachers are using words from languages children are learning and the culture of these languages is also a part of the curriculum. Overall from my child's](#)


perspective languages are boring but I think this is more about the teaching delivery than the language - it is not made to be fun but more rote learning and this is not the way to teach anything these days. Special needs - I think their involvement depends on the needs of the child. My son could not possible learn a language when he was a special need child but was able to focus on the culture of the country - so a choice is good - culture and or language - also getting more involvement from parents and keeping them in the loop is important and also finding native speaking people to talk to the children learning a language

 **19** I am unfortunately unable to answer some of these questions as my son's school does not offer a Languages program. I have made several inquiries and requests to the Principal, but her total lack of interest in providing this curriculum area is very obvious. I am considering removing my child from his current school and moving him to a school that provides learning opportunities in all 8 areas of study and where Languages and parent voice is valued.


 **20** My child's school does not offer language, due to a shortage of teachers. I feel this is not a problem, as I think we should be more concerned with getting the language of English mastered first, by the look of recent L.A.N. results.


 **21** A strong commitment by the Principal is essential if languages in a school are to be valued. St Aloysius has been an example school and as a parent I am very proud of what it has offered my daughter.


South Australian Students said

 **1** Well to be honest, I never really feared my language teacher as much as other subject teachers. I think most student are really taking languages lightly. Some may just be doing languages because they considered it as a slack subject while other only are doing it for the extra points in our TR score at the end of the year. I know this for certain because I am 1 in let say 3 student who do it. I know this for a fact because we even discuss it with each other. Maybe this is the reason why student don't really fear their language teacher as much as other subject teacher because they think language is not a real subject. I recommend that language be something student should study at the beginning of the year, but at the same time they should have the right to choose whether they want to do a language study or not. Also language teacher should be tougher. Because honestly, every time we have an assignment due, no one really bother till the last moment, compare to lets say subject like S.O.S.E, where people do actually stress out if they haven't finish their work yet.

Maybe it's just my school, or maybe it's just my language teacher who's too nice, but all I can say is this is my opinion...another thing about languages is that it should be made more fun and interesting. I know for a high school its pretty childish but after all we are still kids, with all the stress of other subject I would personally like to come to a language class where we learn the art of writing, speaking and their culture in a fun way. Example, learning an old folk song, instead of writing with pen and paper why not try using like a paint brush if its a Chinese class and have cooking lesson on their food, and trying on different style of clothing, why not even get the student to be involve in lots of creative competition on their language. Of course in each fun assignment there has to be a written report in that language. But still this way we are having fun and learning at the same time. I'll stop here, I wrote to much.

 **2** I study Vietnamese as a language at my school. We don't really do much. More languages should be offered in school because I don't like studying it outside of school, wasting time to travel around to different places

 **3** I think that language learning should be up to the student because some of us don't like doing language as they believe that it's a waste of time, however it can be depend on language because students might have interest in doing the subject due to their personal feelings. So you should consider the fact that it should be optional, thanks

 **4** We study a full year of language at our school anyway

✍ 5 The Language course at this school does go for a full year and the curriculum includes many resources that can help us learn.

✍ 6 I'm from South Korea and I learn 2 languages at same time. English and Chinese.
Sometimes it is hard for me to learn 2 languages at same time but I'm really enjoying to learning languages as well as learning their culture.


✍ 7 My main problem with my Chinese class is the way that our class is largely comprised of people of Asian decent, some of which already speak Chinese fluently, or have studied it extensively before, and the teacher goes at the pace of these people, who make up the majority of the class. I often find that I am struggling to keep up, and I think that there should be separate classes for native Chinese speakers and for people picking up the language from year 8


✍ 8 Yes I think that Bill Gates and John Howard would have been WAY more successful if they learnt French

✍ 9 German sucks I hate it.


✍ 10 I believe that a learning languages is very important and helps in future life. Most people do not believe it is important. Due to this in classes where people do not show much enthusiasm, not much is taught. And this does not benefit the people who are in the class to learn. There should be a greater involvement by the school and parents with languages to get people more eager to learn them.

✍ 11 In general the best way that language learning can be strengthened is to give it the same priority as other subjects. Languages seem to take a lesser role in my school and are overshadowed by English, Maths, Health and Physical Education, Science, and other subjects such as Home Economics and Design and Technology. Even though the subject is one that the school wishes to attract students to unpopular decisions have been made without the consultation of any of the students to determine what effect this would have on their desires and preferences for language study in the future, and with no consultation of the language teachers.


 **12** Well Languages in my school are being forced out by lack of numbers and interest. There is a big problem because people think that a language as a subject is not as important as science or maths, and therefore we get told it's a second rate subject. This is not acceptable, yet no-one does anything about it. I think every student should have access to learning a language and not have to put up with being teased by other students.

 **13** I like to learn other languages. Its fun and I could learn more about other country cultures.

 **14** The Chinese program at my school is very fun and entertaining. I love my Chinese


 **15** I really enjoy my Chinese program throughout the year as I have never learnt a language with characters it has been very fun and entertaining. I love my Chinese


 **16** I think language is very fun.

 **17** I don't like my Chinese lessons.


 **18** I think schools should focus a bit more about learning other languages

 **19** Chinese is hard but sometimes fun


 **20** I would like to start by saying that in my school they are wiping out German. That means there will only be 2 languages left: Chinese and French. I find Chinese very very extremely hard because it is not based on the English alphabet. Languages such as French and Greek will be easier to learn because lots of English words come from Greek words and French is based on the English alphabet. It is also hard because my teacher has a strong Chinese accent that makes it confusing for me.

 **21** I started at (name of school) last year and when I started to learn Chinese it was hard but I started to love it.

 **22** [It is cool to learning other languages](#)


 **23** We at Prince Alfred college get a choice between three languages Chinese, (I do Chinese) French and German. If these were to change though we would get a choice on what languages would be available

South Australian Language Teachers said

 **1** Languages are still not given enough time in the curriculum. We have 50 minutes a week for primary to Year 5. At once a week, we do not see students regularly enough to achieve progressive learning for many students. Their attitude is positive, however, as we make sure it is stimulating. It is not preserved from interruptions such as music lessons. Students are withdrawn without consultation with the language teacher - some of these students are likely to be more successful in a language class, not less. Withdrawing students gives the impression to other students that languages are hard and not important. I do not perceive that a student's literacy in their first language or English will improve from withdrawal once a week during language lessons.


I am also concerned about the new SACE in which students may decide to drop subjects at Year 11 and 12 levels. If they are to decrease the number of subjects they study than languages will be dropped before core subjects, I would assume.

I'd like to see languages linked to workplaces and projects in the community so that students see the value of learning a language.

 **3** I teach Asian Studies this year as we lost our JP Language teacher. The 3-7 school still has a language teacher. We have advertised for 1 teacher across both sites for next year. I don't have problems as I do lots of cultural activities, and craft activities to assist with learning. I have covered 1 country per term. I do not have the language skills to do them justice - just the occasional word and counting.

However the children are learning lots about other countries in Asia due to the work I am doing, so feel that they can learn Asian culture without the actual language.


Finding JP resources on the internet is extremely difficult for this and have been unsuccessful getting basic words and how to pronounce them. Even finding basic picture/outlines to download was impossible.

 **3** Languages often compete at high schools as a choice - where they are offered against many of the subjects seen as much more exciting - eg home economics, dance, drama. While languages can be exciting and fascinating, to be successful does involve real commitment to core information - the content is important as well as the process.

The position of languages as optional rather than intrinsic does create difficulties too. At the same time, the maintenance of a language program depends on committed teachers being available in the school and this has also been a problem especially when teachers go on leave. It has been clear in our

school community that there is strong support by our parents for languages and would be heightened by the increased ability to access exchange programs for both students and teachers.

The other issue of concern is the numbers required for viability. Language classes work really effectively when there is ease of interaction - ie small classes of no more than 20 so that students have a real opportunity to communicate in class. This can be difficult in the current climate where the "average" class size will be 28 - in a 50 minute lesson, this could mean less than two minutes of time per person to speak to the teacher or to another person in the class. If there were a concerted effort to reduce numbers in classes and to support small classes in the senior school, it would really help all students and teachers. It is clear that language learning is possible - in Holland and Scandinavia most students learn three or more languages and do not see this as unusual. There is a real sense that the second or subsequent language is acquired more easily and it would be great to see this attitude here in Australia.

 **4** I comment as a primary school Indonesian with no tertiary qualifications. I studied Indonesian in years 8 to 12 at high school. This was enough to pave my way into a permanent job with the Education Department. I am in my 4th year of teaching and have taught the language to years 2-7 on and off during this time. The program has been cancelled for various reasons, for various lengths of time during my time at the school.

Though I feel that learning about another culture (or having an awareness of others) is important to students I don't feel the language component is essential. It is the feeling of myself and my colleagues that with other issues (such as a lack of social skills, and major behavioural issues etc) children now bring to school, learning Indonesian is not so important. There is little support from some families and many children simply don't want to do it. This is the case at my school anyway.

During my 2 days of Indonesian I have 9 classes for times ranging from 1/2 an hour to 90 minutes (2X45 minute sessions). I receive far more success from the younger grades than the older ones - although I have tried various teaching methodologies and included students in planning. They just don't want to do it. It is also tricky from a managerial perspective with different classes constantly coming and going from the Indonesian room.

I could go on and on, but am happy to give you further information if you would like it. I do not wish to teach Indonesian next year and our school is currently investigating incorporating Asian Studies into our SOSE program and not having Indonesian, as at the moment we see it as irrelevant to students with little idea of basic behaviour and social skills etc. It is

interesting to note that all other staff members to my site are not prepared to swap places with me!!!

✍ 5 It was hard trying to keep my comments specific to the School of Languages, which only teaches languages, as opposed to my recently previous school where Languages are not protected, where my Coordinator position was done away with when I left, and where Chinese is now being phased out because of poor staffing decisions and the failure of the school leadership to take on an advocacy role for Languages generally and Chinese specifically.

The two main issues are: in primary, the tying of Languages teaching to NIT time; and in secondary, the vertical grouping of classes. When I left my previous school they vertically grouped Years 10, 11 and 12 Chinese and then wondered why the Year 9s wouldn't go on with it!

The only answer for the latter is for Education Departments to create a supplementary staffing pool that schools could access in order to avoid vertical grouping. I have written a proposal in relation to this that has the support of the AEU and which has been given to the Languages Plan Implementation group in SA, on which I represent the AEU.

Happy to send you a copy if you would like it.
(Contact details supplied)

✍ 6 The question on whether to limit the number of languages taught, so that there is better continuity from primary to high school, or when the population migrates, is going to pit languages against each other instead of working together to promote the importance of all language acquisition.

The question I would like to see asked is "Should students be offered the opportunity to learn two languages?"

The way timetables are worked out at schools these days also needs to be addressed. To expect students to elect to take languages on to year 12 when in some primary and secondary schools lessons are taught in 75 minute lessons is to expect too much from students and teachers!

✍ 7 Languages have to compete with so many other subjects on offer. At times children (and their parents) choose subjects they perceive to be less demanding/ more immediately relevant. I have known students who apply to attend our school (a special interest language school) in order to study languages, but who drop both languages at the end of yr 10...to concentrate on those subjects in which they perceive they will perform better / will be more relevant for their careers / will be easier.

Having a lack of qualified, experienced, teachers who can take over and make language learning enjoyable (who can inspire and motivate) when teachers go on leave/ get sick etc, is a problem.

Teachers need to be released regularly to develop relevant up-to-date materials/resources and then they need time to improve/ update them every semester / year.


Sometimes student teachers aren't as proficient in oral language use as I would like/ expect...some are a little daunted by extra work involved in being a good language teacher. Some have even said that they would only consider teaching part-time. They need extended in country experience, as do some teachers! I recently went on a 3 week funded study tour - the first time in my career I have been able to apply for such an initiative!

I have noticed in the last few yrs that students rarely attempt H/W regularly. v v few students actually go home and learn vocab and grammar off by heart! Few carry out extra reading in the Target Language. we are all time poor, but the minimal amount of time some are prepared to spend, even on drafting their writing etc, is a concern.

The type of language instruction my own Primary school aged children receive at their local catholic school is disappointing! the school is not prepared to inject the money needed to fund more than one qualified teacher (who has minimal language skills) and so they use teachers from the background (also with minimal language skills) to teach the language to the students across the school!!!! How much real language learning is actually occurring? What sorts of perceptions about language learning are being developed?

Interestingly, it is only since I have been at my current High school, after 20 years of teaching, that I have felt that I belonged to a faculty that was valued in the school!!

Good luck with your investigations.


 8 In a nutshell:


If education is important, education inclusive of languages, then it also starts with the education of the languages teachers.

The quality/ level of language proficiency of languages student teachers in the past few years is of concern to me.

We seem to cater for the languages students who are talented and ambitious to achieve highly. We still do not cater for the breadth of student population we teach languages to.

Time tabling not conducive to languages learning, absences and no means to enforce students to follow up missed work, the "elective" status of languages, as something one does not need for life, staff who does not value languages as high as other subject areas and the "tiptoeing around students" in order not to ask too much, as you will lose them, creates an attitude of unimportance. Consequently, too many students feel inclined to give up languages at the senior secondary level in order to fit in subjects they "need" to have. As a languages teacher with extensive overseas experience, I believe languages learning and teaching in Australia is still not considered "academic practice". We get the results at the Stage 2 level, however I believe there are not enough students reaching this level.
(Contact details supplied)


 **9** We are about to review our language offerings and to introduce the IBMYP the whole languages debate is very relevant to us.
(Contact details supplied)

 **10** I believe that it is unrealistic/ridiculous to expect an Australian who has studied a language for three years at an Australian university to be able to teach year 11 or year 12 language courses.

As a native Spanish speaker with specific grammar training at university in my country of origin, I find it absurd that people who cannot even speak the language in question are allowed to teach it at secondary school level.


I think a compulsory exam should be set for all Australian students completing a language education degree to assess what their level is/where they are at. This exam should be conducted by native speakers WITH grammar training or university studies in a Spanish speaking country and with experience in language teaching.

Regarding Spanish in particular, I would like to add that it is a language that, when well taught, elicits great enthusiasm from students. It is spoken in 22 countries all over the world, and it would be a tragedy to reduce the funding for it. Australia should take the lead from countries such as the United States or New Zealand, which are making Spanish a vital part of their curriculum -- in the case of New Zealand this is due to increased commerce with countries such as Chile--.


 **11** I really believe that languages are suffering due to the lack of time allocation. In order to truly accomplish what is stated in SACSA teacher need at least 1.5 hours MINIMUM. I find that in my 80 minute lessons (40 min each


session), by the time we get organised and then pack up, 10 mins is wasted from each lesson, which really gives students only 60min per week, not nearly enough to successfully accomplish the outcomes required.

I am also happy that you mentioned children with special needs or learning difficulties. I have said this many times at my school but to no avail. Instead of children going to special programs during regular class time I believe that they should be exempt from languages and go then instead. I am not (as suggested by my peers) trying to get rid of the difficult students or devaluing the LOTE program, I truly believe that this would be in the best interest of the students. Their first priority should be to be able to use their own mother tongue proficiently before they attempt to learn another language.
(Contact details supplied)


 **12** A major issue with teaching and learning languages is lack of understanding by adults (parents and staff) regarding internationalisation, globalisation and inter-cultural competency and how language benefits students in the future. Younger students reflect attitudes they learn from adults therefore it is at times a battle to have them see value in language learning.

The next major issue is the lack of QUALITY language teachers.
The third issue is the narrow focus of the education department with regards to International Education, it is seen only as a revenue generator by selling education the overseas students, rather than providing support for local students to have an international education, that is language learning and overseas educational experiences for both students and staff. We can manage with the lack of support, but we are actually hindered in everything we do with regards to providing our students and staff international education experiences.
(Contact details supplied)

 **13** In small country schools it is difficult to have experienced language teachers. Many in our area have been retrained and function as classroom teachers and language teachers and it actually works well! However, shortage of specialist teachers can make it more difficult for secondary flow through. LOTE is alive and well in all primary schools in our area and children enjoy their lessons. More time needed to in-service teachers and allow them interaction and T&D and not necessarily in their own time! Distance and time are big factors and there is a limit to how much out of hours work can be expected. Some isolated country schools are doing a brilliant job.

 **14** I have become so disillusioned with language teaching in Australia that I left the Department in 1999. I was employed in an international school

overseas, then came back but remembered why I left...I went to another international school overseas and when I came back I remembered why I left. I am now in another international school overseas (my answers to the survey are reflections of all my years of teaching in South Australia NOT my current work as a language teacher in my third international school overseas)

 **15** I thank you for your interest and the opportunity to be involved. I believe that there exists a fundamental lack of clarity around the purpose(s) of languages education: is it to teach culture? Is it to teach communicative competence? Or is it to teach children to be literate in another language? I believe that we should aspire for biliteracy (as a minimum) through our teaching and learning programs. Once a child has become literate in a second and subsequent language, then they are able to effectively and optimally learn through that language. Moreover, I believe that with the limited time and resources available to languages learning that the core thrust for teaching about culture should be taken up in partnership with the languages teacher by the classroom teacher through their SOSE curriculum (take Spanish as an example - there are 28 countries where Spanish is the official or a major language used - how does one do justice to the cultural norms and mores of all these peoples and deliver an effective languages education that enables students to read, write, speak, listen, compose etc.. in that language?). Given the amount of time that educators agree must be spent on developing literacy in English I and my colleagues are left astounded by the amount of time dedicated to teaching literacy in other languages. It is not enough to teach language we must be teaching about the language: grapho-phonemic correspondences, encoding and decoding skills, comprehension skills, alliteration etc... Speaking developmentally, if we are to achieve biliteracy and thereby be competitive with European and Asian countries, we need to reorientate our curriculum and pedagogy - we must start paying attention to the research on the ways children acquire and develop second and subsequent languages and then translate this into world class programs and methodology. In doing so, governments will need to allocate funds for resources - where can we buy big books, guided reading sets and listening post sets for languages other than English? Moreover, how many schools are able to purchase a range of storybooks in the target language for their libraries? How can we aspire for mastery and automaticity in the language (literacy) if we can't surround the children in rich literature?

I and many of my colleagues also believe that it is time to rationalise the languages taught and when they are offered. Why do we attempt to introduce to junior primary children, who are not yet literate with the English language, a completely new orthographic code? Psychologists have long understood that humans have a limited working memory and that this memory works best (enables the storing and retrieval of information through a rich web of interconnected concepts - dendrites) when new information is scaffolded onto already known information. In other words, minimise the confusion and


attentional demands for children by beginning with languages which have a similar orthographic code and once the students have established a conceptual awareness of the patterns and codes of languages we can use this basis for teaching the non-alphabetic languages that may be desired. Moreover, if our goal as educators is to prepare students for the future, as most educators that I know do, then which languages should be taught? Which languages will be global languages in 20 and 50 years and thereby provide the most relevance and opportunities for children? Some very interesting research has already been done on this based upon national census data and data from the UN based upon projections of population, political and economic organisation, urbanisation, literacy and health statistics to mention but a few. The ENGCO model was developed upon this data and has shown some very important trends which I think the education system must discuss.


Lastly, any real progress is going to take time, energy and resourcing. This necessarily implicates the tertiary sector in many ways. One very important area of course is in pre-service training. I wonder how many tertiary sites are offering a language curriculum that includes instruction on teaching for literacy in a second language?

I would be most happy to engage with the authors of this survey and/or the organisations who are facilitating this process. I have a very strong relationship with the parent community of my school and we are very committed and proud of our second language literacy program. We are developing a very successful model at our site that addresses, already, many of the issues which I have raised here.

I am currently a practicing languages teacher in the primary sector as well as a PhD student undertaking action research into the teaching of second languages for literacy. I am also involved in PD delivery for languages teachers in my state and I am working on many of the issues that I have outlined above through my research, with my department, the tertiary sector, parent representatives, teacher organisations and school resource suppliers. My thanks again for the opportunity to express my thoughts and opinions and I look forward to any future contact.


(Contact details supplied)

 **16** The Principal of a school is the key to language program support. Over my 30 years experience, the vibrancy of the program can depend on the interest of the Principal who in turn can motivate staff, students, and parents. I have experienced Principals who have had to be challenged on their attitudes. I have had a Principal who has manipulated the Governing Council so that their voice in all matters curriculum was silenced.

 **17** I think that Language teachers are not thought of as equals in the school community. It needs to have a strong principal who values language

learning to show that language learning is as important as all the other topics taught.

(Contact details supplied)

 **18** Re point 157: this is the crux of the whole language teaching and learning issue. Language education, for whatever reason, seems to have a "poor relation" image. It certainly needs to be STRENGTHENED. Here is HOW:


.allocate more time, daily lesson is essential to achieve proficiency. 90 minutes per week is simply tokenism

.otherwise, be realistic of expectation. As it is, most LOTE lessons are really language and culture awareness experiences.


. resource the program adequately. I know of school that spend more money on purchasing tennis balls than the LOTE program

. LOTE teacher often teaches the whole school, he/she needs more NIT to prepare lesson, mark books, and build relationship with staff and students. one often feels very isolated. No wonder the burnt out rate among LOTE teachers is high

. ICT is fine if teachers are trained to implement it. More T&D please!

 **19** One of the fundamental features of the relative strength of high school subjects is their perceived connection to tertiary study. If a link between tertiary entrance and the study of languages at senior secondary level can be strengthened, e.g. as a prerequisite for certain courses, then languages study will be perceived as more "relevant" (a slippery term and generally not well defined). Similarly, high school curriculum needs to be bundled so that students take on packages within a broad pathway: certain pathways should contain compulsory and sequential courses of language study leading to achievement within standards. However, it is most important that curriculum input is well described and clearly structured in terms of the content of learning; a description of "constructivist" outcomes is not of its own a satisfactory or sufficient condition for sound learning and teaching. This will necessitate the clear and unambiguous description of the target audience for a course of study viz native speakers, background learners, second language learners and the complete novice foreign language learner. It is essential to define these groups and the courses suitable for each so as to remove the disincentives for learners that currently apply in languages such as Chinese. It is often stated that the younger one is, the better it is to learn a language. This is a gross over simplification and significantly distorts the expectations and delivery of primary and junior secondary programs. Younger learners may learn more naturalistically but only given certain conditions such as the provision of a language rich environment, connection to other parts of the school curriculum and connection to the wider community, and also

sufficiently well trained and well prepared teachers. It may also be the case that older learners such as senior secondary school students may learn languages very effectively, given certain conditions: generally these students have clearer goals, higher levels of motivation and personal organisation and the ability to connect language study to other areas of knowledge. Investment in beginner's courses at senior secondary level may achieve a better return in both dollar terms and social investment.

 **20** There are clearly documented benefits to learning a language - conceptual thinking skills, cultural understanding, more pluralist thinking, and better development of intelligence.


This means that monolingual people do NOT have these advantages.

This means that a monolingual person is UNSUITABLE for a promotion position, or perhaps even for a teaching position.


If education authorities halfheartedly believed their own platitudes about language learning, they would only employ, and only promote, people who had mastered a second language.

Most of the problems associated with language programmes would then disappear very quickly.

The second problem is the range of languages taught, which is the main reason for our unco-ordinated, ineffective languages programme. It needs to be recognised that having only one or two easily mastered, widely learned (i.e. world languages) would be better supported by the community, facilitate teacher training, and give credibility to the entire idea of language teaching. The present vague mish-mash of wildly varying programmes is a good reason not to become a language teacher, and not to take language learning seriously.

 **21** In order to do justice to Language teaching time needs to be allocated. Two forty-five minute lessons per week are standard & this is NOT ENOUGH! Some schools are operating programs with even less time & little can be achieved.

An attitudinal change is needed in the community to truly value learning languages but this won't happen when they are given such low priority when it comes to time & resources within schools.

 **22** I would like to just inform that I am in my first year of teaching a language in the junior primary and primary years. Please take this into consideration when collating the responses.

The only real issue I have is that sometimes language teachers feel isolated. Sharing ideas and learning from others is important maybe there needs to be more days where language teachers can get together and have planning days (learning teams).

✍ 23 Learning any language is not easy BUT having a chance to do so is rewarding. Therefore, government should have all languages (as many as possible) available in every zone. Extra funding should go to 1 to 2 schools in each zone which can be classified as a "specialist language" and it should have some criteria. For example, students to study 2 languages in year 8, 1 in year 9 and 10 but also have an option of continuing with both.

✍ 24 I believe one important way to strengthen languages is to work with principals and administrators and staff in both high schools and primary schools. In my experience principals who have been overseas in a non-English speaking country are often much more supportive of language education. It is important to change mindsets and perceptions amongst people in schools who make decisions eg timetablers and school counsellors.

The MY baccalaureate program which runs in my school has a really positive influence. Language after year 8 is not compulsory but students who wish to get the MYP certificate must do a language. In this way there is strong encouragement of language study through formal recognition of its value by being compulsory in MYP. I believe we must offer choice but demonstrate formally the value of language learning.

The issue of transition from primary to secondary is also very important. If the local primary schools offer the same language as the high school then we should provide continuity of learning in year 8. Again we are demonstrating the value and importance of learning a language. Talk is of little value. We must demonstrate through action in schools that languages are important, and currently we are not doing that well

(Contact details supplied)

✍ 25 While language learning is one of the 8 areas of study, timetabling and choices offered to students often does not reflect that.

In contrast to other core subjects, students still expect that all Language lessons must be fun, instead of seeing it as an academic subject.

Very rarely is it possible for a student to learn more than one language, even if two or three are taught in the school.

Very often language in yr 9 are put on the same lines as computer studies, home economics, or tech studies. Very often languages in yr 11 are offered in the same lines as science subjects.

Very often languages are only compulsory in yr 8, and sometimes taught on only half a line or for one semester, clearly sending the message to students that learning a language is not important.

Very often yr 11 and yr 12 students are taught in the same class, as not many students continue with their language. This is an absolute disgrace. It compares with specialist math yr 11 and yr 12 being in the same lesson - in


fact, it is worse, as language learning needs students to engage in oral exercises, practicing, listening etc. etc. - yr 12 students work on a very different level than yr 11 students. Our yr 12 students in particular are greatly disadvantaged.

 26 I think there needs to be greater coordination of languages taught and Primary and Secondary levels.


Language programs in primary schools are problematic because they are viewed as babysitting time by other teachers. If core teachers were able to teach language on a daily basis as part of their overall programming it would improve outcomes.

At secondary level, the importance placed on languages by the school hierarchy is the single most important factor in the effectiveness of the program within the school. The school leaders set the tone for how LOTE is viewed by students and parents within the school community. When school leaders take LOTE seriously, there is a beneficial flow-on effect to all.

Inadequate time allocated to LOTE classes is a real issue and supporting LOTE teachers in terms of behaviour management is also important.

 27 Country schools have many more issues of teacher supply than city schools, yet distance ed/online options are not available to support continuity and quality of teaching except at considerable cost via Open Access College. Such an option at minimal cost per student would turn the whole situation around, with supervising teachers learning alongside their classes.

Accelerated/Beginner programs at yr 11 and 12 are an option explored by my school with great enthusiasm from senior students seeking to travel or work overseas or planning to enter Tourism, Hospitality and International Business options. We also open these classes (taken after hours) to interested adults in the community and these integrated classes are highly successful

 28 I believe that Languages in specifically non-government schools are not particularly well resourced in terms of money, teachers, availability of 'true' resources and their high cost and the relevance/age of these resources. In our school we teach two languages - French and Indonesian- and are always competing against the 'non-academic'(perceived) subjects like Art, Photography, Craft, Design, etc because the students see language-learning as too much work. Is this just our clientele or is it reflective of today's society? (Contact details supplied)

✍ 29 Chinese proverb says, "Sharpen the knife before cutting the wood." If we want to deliver sound language education, first of all we need to have well trained teachers. There are many teachers in Australia teaching subjects other than their major. How can you teach when you have little or even zero knowledge about that subject? It's not only unfair to students, it's also unfair to teachers. If we don't take education seriously, no one will take teachers seriously. But we know if we want to be a smart nation, it's time for us to invest in education properly.

I think the current language curriculum doesn't give enough support for teachers. There are many language experts in this nation, why can't we develop something solid for teachers?
(Contact details supplied)


✍ 30 I believe that parents support an understanding of LOTE programs is very important. Because as English is well spoken all over the world it impels to native English speaker parents to take seriously a second language learning for their children. On the other hand it seem that all over the world people like to encourage their children to learn English rather than keep their own and that is what happen with our NESB students, wasting a valuable language diversity for Australia's future. In my opinion Australia Education department should educate parent about how important and easy it is for a child to learn other languages as well as their first one. It will help to unveil some myth that people have about language learning and acquisition.


✍ 31 Primary School children need to be given more contact time with their language teachers. One lesson a week is not enough to make any difference.

Languages should be compulsory in Year 8 and taught over an entire year. There shouldn't be a semester of one language and then a semester of another. At Year 9 parents and students should be strongly advised to continue with a language but students who are completely disinterested should have the option to opt out. One of the biggest problems is Year 9 students who are not interested and therefore disrupt the entire class - this sometimes leads to students who should be continuing in Year 10 not doing so -due to not wanting to be part of an unruly class.


In order to receive registration schools should have to have 75 percent or higher of students continuing with a language in Year 9.

All universities should offer bonus points for studying a foreign language as it is a very challenging undertaking and to encourage more students to do so.


 **32** I believe that the Languages taught during my teacher training at university solely focussed on my own language skills, rather than looking at how I could effectively teach the language. I have found the most useful information relating to Languages education has been provided by the Catholic Education Office in Adelaide. Teachers are given the opportunity to apply for grants in which they are provided with release time in order to participate on the courses being offered. Through such training I have now introduced a guided reading program in Italian to my classes; I teach the language through the use of various genres and use a functional grammar approach. Such practices have had a huge influence on the quality of my teaching and with much promotion and advertising of such practices in school newsletters etc, the profile of Languages at my school has heightened. Therefore, I believe that teacher training courses at University should incorporate courses where the focus is on 'how' to teach languages.

 **33** I believe that the time allocated to Languages teaching in schools must be lengthened as it is impossible to expect students to gain an adequate amount of knowledge of a language in an hour per week.


Furthermore, there needs to be more connection between primary school and high school Languages education as I have found that many of our students become bored at high school because they go back to the basics of the language. Hence, streaming of students who have had exposure to the language may be a solution.

 **34** It concerns me that although we have a thriving language programme at our school there is no allowance made for this when students move on to High School. There they have to start again with numbers and colours which is obviously going to turn them off. Our school has taken on the AIM program and will have reasonable fluency when they leave primary school and this needs to be taken into consideration at the High School.

Although all core areas are supposed to be 100 minutes, most languages would be lucky to get 90 minutes and often it is only 30-60. Languages should be treated the same as the other areas in time given, reporting and priority. If parents were made more aware of the benefits of learning a language then they may be more positive to their children about learning a language. A child's negative attitude usually comes from the parents.
(Contact details supplied)


 **35** Our school teaches Indonesian. The problems in Indonesia over the past few years have really affected the community and school's attitude towards this language. We are considering that we may need to change the language we teach. We have gone from having a Yr 12 class of 12 students, a year 11 class, year 10 class, 2 year 9 classes and 4 yr 8 Indonesian classes to

only having yr 8's do the language as each year less and less students choose to continue with languages. One of our Indonesian teachers is leaving and we will be unlikely to find a replacement so will struggle to even offer it to all our Yr 8 students next year.

 36 In South Australia, the compulsion factor has been removed which means that effectively schools can opt not to offer a language program. I firmly believe that to create social reform a hard decision has to be made and that is that all students from R-12 study a language other than English in a quality educationally-valid program with suitably-qualified teachers - teachers who speak and write the language being taught well and who are able to teach that language effectively. Being a native speaker of a language doesn't automatically qualify someone as a good teacher of a language.


Teachers need to spend time in-country so that they become proficient in the language and have some first-hand knowledge of the language in its own cultural context. In addition, social reform is vital in order to create an environment where students and their families see the relevance and benefits long-term of learning another language and the affects it can have on a student's understanding of their own language/s and cultural identity.

My school community values learning a language as an integral part of the learning program for all children and this is evidenced by the large numbers of students who choose to continue to learn a language once it is no longer compulsory. However we still believe that not enough students are being provided with adequate skills to live in the smaller world that is the new global environment. Learning a language facilitates learning a subsequent one and has life impact both linguistically and culturally - if they are taught effectively and in a style which motivates students to want to get the most out of the experience. Learning a language in Australia should be seen like learning Maths or English, kicking a ball at recess time or eating lunch - it is a normal part of the curriculum in which every student should participate. It is part of an education for life.

 37 I am concerned that the Plan for Languages Education in schools is never implemented by all schools, even though it is implied that it is compulsory. These plans are brought out on a regular basis but it is left to the teachers to fight for the survival of their language.

To produce an educated population, it should be a requirement that students study a language other than English to year 12 level, if they wish to be accepted into a course in a tertiary institution.

Too many teachers in Australia have low literacy levels and are not able to even model correct English expression.

 38 My responses reflect my satisfaction in the current school where I teach. Here, language learning is well supported and valued, very much on an even par with all other areas of the curriculum. Of course, more time, and more frequent exposure during the week would see better progress. And, of course, when different activities disrupt the normal timetable, the language program (along with other specialist programs) suffers because there is no leeway in the weekly timetable to reschedule or "catch up".

However, I have been in schools where the learning of a language is not valued by the general parent population (and therefore by many of the students) and/or it is not supported, even undermined, by staff or administration. Then it can be very draining having to be always selling the benefits and promoting your program in a way that no other curriculum area has to do.

It is imperative to have well-trained, capable language teachers presenting decent language programs at all levels of schooling (whatever the language on offer). There must also be opportunities for continuity between primary and secondary. Perhaps it is not always essential that the local feeder school offers the same language as all its local primary schools. So long as there is an alternative opportunity for students who wish to continue the same language from primary to secondary. The most important thing is the quality of the program in both sectors. It is also important to acknowledge the prior learning of students moving from primary to secondary. I know this is a longstanding problem and I do not know what the solution is.

 39 [Random thoughts...](#)

[I find that good use of the internet and up to date French information, combined with a cultural approach, goes over well with my \(upper\) primary students.](#)

[My French teaching recognises that vocabulary comes after grammar and accent.](#)

[I teach using a Language Arts approach more than a vocab development focus.](#)

[I find Fr easy to cover culturally as there is so much info in the local papers, ads, etc.](#)

[I wish I could get paid for attending classes at the Alliance to keep my grammar and accent up to date..no such luck. It costs a fair bit per year to do this!](#)

✍ 40 My language is new on the curriculum and there was only a small provision for funds to start the course off. Whenever there is an appeal for money, there are always huge hurdles to jump to have finance approved. Languages are not awarded the financial support that they need to give them the standing that they are due. Students generally are motivated more when there is access to a wider range of resources other than text books. I think too that because of the poor retention of students to the senior years, languages are not seen as having the same degree of importance as say Maths, even though the retention rate for this subject has fallen too.

✍ 41 Spanish Language in SA is well supported by the learning service provided by DECS. There is a teacher run organisation that also works in conjunction with the Spanish support learning service to give teachers help with their programs.

The Spanish embassy also visits isolated schools and provides teacher training, resources and recognition for both teachers and successful students.

Spanish is a very important language for the future of Australians given that there are so many countries that speak it as their first language and so many of them are just across the Pacific Ocean (for trade potential), it is used by the United Nations and will become a major language in the USA in the very near future. It is extremely rich culturally and has so many examples to use in the classroom because of the differences between the countries. Children love to hear about the ancient cultures and are extremely aware of Spanish being used in games/ technology and on the television.

✍ 42 A key issue is time, especially, but not only, in the primary grades. Parents and children begin with considerable expectations, they want to learn something. They could achieve real, measurable competence in using a second language but the time allowed only guarantees poor results. Our children do not lack the intelligence or natural ability to learn languages and there are programmes in other parts of the (especially the non-English speaking) world which are undeniably more successful than ours. The expectations of our system are just too low and therefore insufficient time and resources are invested in the business and it all becomes a self fulfilling prophecy of wretchedly miserable outcomes.

✍ 43 The teaching of LOTE is seen as having equal value with the non-contact time it affords the class teacher. It is time-tabled with the latter priority in mind. In SA the curriculum standard for meeting the SACSA outcomes is 90 minutes of lesson time. I do not know of many schools that provide this in the

catholic sector in which I teach. LOTE is reported as stringently as other curriculum areas at my school - with nearly 500 students this is a mammoth job and full of difficulties where one lesson a week is delivered. (Reports issued twice yearly). My non-contact time is split into small periods (determined by time constraints of the school schedule) during the day, which is useful to survive between lessons. Class room teachers often have blocks of non-contact time in which planning/preparation/assessment can be achieved. This is not possible in my working day. No consideration is made for the special needs of language teachers. I have no access to ICT (located in library).

On the plus side, I have my own classroom - indeed a rarity and one that makes up for many other shortcomings in the system. It goes a long way to raise the profile of LOTE in my school and greatly influences the range and nature of the lessons delivered. (I will lose the space in 2008)

✍ 44 Until languages are adopted (at least in spirit) by the whole school staff they will fail to be seen by the students as a serious contender for present or future study. LOTE should be used in all learning areas at some level in order to validate their inclusion in the curriculum. This may take the form of simple instructions in the classroom, taking the roll and so on but PREFERABLY should be interwoven with the general focus for the term in the primary classroom.

In addition, where possible there should be far more time allocated to learning a language in primary school. One hour a week is way too little, especially when no other teacher uses it during the week. In Canada 4x40 minute lessons a week in French! Compare!

There are no short cuts to learning a language. It requires as much practice as possible. If parents truly want languages they will need to lobby for it to have a much better status in schools, which will necessitate some sacrifices in terms of time allocation for other learning areas (or excursions, special days etc.)

At present LOTE is a token subject area due to

The community's lack of conviction that it matters (the bottom line in my opinion)


Its low status in schools (seen as a poor relation of Society and Environment or an attempt at cultural understanding and tolerance by many teachers)

Its massively insufficient time allocation

Its role as a non-instruction time subject in a school (teachers are glad to have a break from the kids and are not required to engage with the subject. As a result of their reluctance or lack of enthusiasm kids just don't take it seriously).

Often under qualified or unsuitable teachers (eg high school trained teachers taking primary classes due to insufficient no's of primary LOTE teachers.)

Finally there are WAY too many languages taught to have them well resourced with good materials and well qualified teachers. One European and one Asian language is more than enough in a high school. Less is more! Target the best resourced languages and promote them. Once you've been well instructed in one language its much easier to learn a second if you choose to. Better to have a small group of languages taught well than the current situation of offering a language for a plethora of reasons such as good for job opportunities (eg Japanese) important for kids with ethnic backgrounds (eg Greek) and so on. Look at the quality of resources FIRST, then other factors such as the needs of the student population and so on.

 45 My role as a language teacher in a small country town has been to develop the French program beyond Year 8 level. To this end, I have been successful, with my fourth Year 12 class in 2007. However, it has been an emotionally exhausting operation. Undoubtedly, I have paid a high price for this success as I have had limited support from colleagues and even administration. In my first year at the school, I was told by a colleague (who is now a Deputy Principal), "French will never work here, kids won't choose it, because there are too many choices". Demoralising, perhaps but I have had to fight this attitude and negativity constantly over six years. Even today, students and parents alike have been "counselled out" of selecting to study a language. Fortunately the parent community has been supportive of me but it's tough. At the age of 33, I have been considering starting my own family but the thought of losing my years of work because there are no teachers available, or at least willing to work in the country.

I am aware of a number of excellent jobs in the city which are becoming available, thus further reducing the possibility of acquiring another teacher here. I would really like to see a national campaign highlighting the importance of language learning and its benefits, promoting the good work in schools and the outcomes for students who have studied a language. Eg: My first Year 12 French student, is currently volunteering in Peru, as an English teacher. He plans to continue French and Spanish at university as part of an International Studies or Journalism Degree. To highlight the fact that we live in a global community and that being bilingual is no longer restricted to the Europeans. We have French people travelling and working in our region. A student working in the local McDonalds restaurant was able to assist four French tourists who spoke little English. She was delighted to recount this story to her class. This is REAL LIFE!!!!!!

As I say to my students, it's not about the French language - it's about being able to communicate with others outside of our cultural borders, to understand the mentality and attitudes of others in their words. So much is lost in translation, so live it and breathe it!

I hope that my little country life anecdotes can be of some use in your research. I am passionate about languages, I speak six in total and as an 'Anglo Saxon' Aussie try to demonstrate to my kids that anyone can do that!!

(Contact details supplied)

✍ 46 I would like to see the universities in SA have higher enrolments for languages. It is impossible to get language teachers into the country. Students in the country are being disadvantaged because of this imbalance. I was advised that last year only one person At Uni in SA was studying and finishing a German course. She was employed before leaving Uni to teach in the Barossa Valley schools. What hope does the rest of the state have?

✍ 47 Research as shown that learning a non-alphabetic language takes more time than alphabetic languages (one such study is from the US army). There is also evidence to show that romance languages with their cognates and, often, European languages visibility in the community on [signs, in ads etc] makes the learning more realistic for the MAJORITY. This is not to say that non-alphabetic languages should not be taught but students should have a choice. And there is some concern that these languages in Primary Schools are often 'token' languages with a lot of emphasis on the beauty of the writing and making artifacts rather than language learning (teachers have been heard to say they are too hard). Such a situation makes the parent community (and often the teaching staff, see 'languages as the soft, and therefore not really necessary' option...and option it becomes.

Also it is a furphy that the same language should be in PS and well as HS. Unless there is continuity of learning (and this means a lot of contact) between PS and HS then students often turn off in PS saying they will only have to start again in HS.

Then too, if the PS has a strong languages programme students will gain by doing a different language in HS to open their horizons further and to build one language on another (this is the literacy of language learning at work)

All languages are wonderful to learn. There are many reasons for choosing a language. But if I had a say in planning, it would be for all PSs to have full learning of an alphabetic language (and that includes Indonesian of course) and all high schools to have at least one of each alphabetic and non-alphabetic.

Here there is a case for secondary schools to consider the introduction of a Beginners course in a language to encourage students to finish with a language at year 12 level.. it could be an extra one or, if they have become disenchanted with what they have been learning , they can pick up a new one. One of our children did just this, changing from French to Spanish and gaining a very high score on the Beginners which she continues to do with

distinction at university. She is still interested in French and with her maturity wishes to perhaps study it intensively in France. She did Japanese in PS and remembers the origami and practicing strokes but gained no intercultural understanding that she can express nor a feel for the language.

✍ 48 I would like to receive the result of this survey. I would like to find out what other teachers are feeling in this subject. I enjoy teaching Japanese myself, however when I have students who don't want to learn a language in the class, it is difficult to deal with. These students should be separated from the class and should do a sort of 'cultural lessons', I think.

✍ 49 I have experience teaching French and Japanese over a 30 year period and am happy to be contacted by email to follow up my opinions if required (Contact details supplied)

✍ 50 Teacher training programs need to be strengthened if we want to improve results. Opportunities for teachers to live and study in the country of the LOTE are also crucial.

Bilingual / immersion programs would be preferable to standard programs offered. Canadian system could be used as a model.

✍ 51 I continue to be frustrated at the lack of continuity of German for those students leaving Primary School and going to Blackwood High School to continue their studies. In recent years the primary schools and High school have nominated Katzensprung 1 to teach to the years 6s and 7s so that continuing students can go straight to Katzensprung 2. I have never been asked to give names of students whom I would recommend to go onto Katzensprung 2 but I sent an email at the beginning of term 3 anyway. I have not yet received confirmation that the email giving this information was received, and despite going to numerous after school IB meetings, my German teaching colleagues are rarely there, and I have not been a part of any discussions to plan for 2007. Each year the excuses for not having the high school students in the appropriate classes continue - the students wanted to be with their friends, or they didn't get my information in time. I was frankly taken aback recently, when I was told by a high school colleague not to "concern myself with High School matters" - let them do the decision-making. I try very hard to express my opinion in a positive way and at times when it is even asked for. At the same time, parents frequently complain that work in high school is easier than the work I am doing in primary school.

✍ 52 It would be helpful for students learning a language if primary schools taught English grammar!!!

✍ 53 Some schools cancel or combine small language classes in the last 2 years of schooling. This places unnecessary burdens on teachers and students. Effective language teaching is very teacher centred, with students requiring optimal time for small group/individual attention when developing oral and written proficiencies. This is even more difficult when 2 courses are being taught at the same time.
Schools should be prepared to support small candidature classes as those students have committed themselves to years of sustained effort and deserve the very best programs in their final years.

✍ 54 Although I said some Asian languages are too hard (q148), I am referring to Primary school only. The emphasis in primary school is to learn how to learn a language. Not enough time is given to necessarily learn a language well. If these skills are learnt in primary years then they can be transferred to any language. I think it is easier to learn the different scripts when they have some knowledge of language learning.

✍ 55 I believe that it is absolutely essential that the training of language teachers be better coordinated so that qualified teachers are not placed in schools where there is no language, or a different language, so that their training is not wasted. I am a retrainee and of my group of 8 who began, 3 withdrew because their other teaching loads, subjects or school placements did not allow for incorporation of language teaching into their timetable, 2 were placed in schools with a different language and no prospect of being able to use their language, and only 3 of us actually have been able to use the language training we received.

✍ 56 It is better to offer language instruction through the classroom teacher rather than as a Non Instructional Time subject if possible or to have the support AND PARTICIPATION of the classroom teacher during the language lesson.

✍ 57 I do not have time now to add any more, but would be happy to be contacted at a later date.
(Contact details supplied)

✍ 58 Regarding the question of whether girls learn languages better than boys....

I answered "yes", but it isn't that black and white.

I have male students who participate well and find the study stimulating. They are a minority. There are also girls who work in this way, again not many per class. There are plenty of boys and girls who are rather passive in lessons, do the required bookwork when asked, but don't really take risks in experimenting with using language. In the main it is the girls who listen better and get on task more promptly. Behaviour problems mostly involve boys.

Teaching language as a N.I.T. (non instructional time) provision for other staff has its disadvantages. I think it becomes seen as an outside subject. The time given to the class-teacher is the focus rather than the value that the language-learning has for the students.

Insufficient time (through LOTE being provided only as NIT) is an issue. In the older grades, (Middle School, yrs 6/7) so much else goes on that LOTE lessons are frequently passed up, attendance is erratic, large time gaps happen between lessons . No good for continuity of theme, learning, etc.

✍ 59 The fact that a language could be offered for a semester only just goes to show the atrociously poor understanding of language development. Language develops through practice and time. The mind needs to adjust to different patterns/logic. It is not just that a semester offer is preposterous; the idea that students could pick a language in only one year is equally so.

On another note, I find that it is absurd that people who are not fluent in the language (not even proficient orally) are teaching at year 11 and 12. The oral part of language is crucial and ties in with everything else (listening, reading, writing).

Moreover, education for the teaching of languages at universities is appalling. They lump all different languages together, and don't teach any useful methodology or grammar or anything. People who are fluent at one or more languages should be delivering those courses; people with experience in teaching language at all levels, and with CONCRETE PRACTICAL ideas, not people who just blabber on for a whole year about the importance of multiculturalism and raising cultural awareness through language. LANGUAGE AUTOMATICALLY DOES THAT, BY A PROCESS THAT I WOULD EQUATE TO "OSMOSIS." Just picking a text from the country in question, a novel, a piece of art, music, a poem, etcetera does the job; the ultimate focus should still be on the language and mastering it. It is the task of SOSE and other subject areas to always focus specifically and consciously on culture. The task of languages education is that: teaching language, and through that, culture as well.

✍ 60 I disagree with the fact that only the eight most taught languages (currently) are given priority in the National Plan and as a consequence in many of the Languages Research Projects (eg Intercultural Language Teaching and Learning)
(Contact details supplied)

✍ 61 I believe that learning a Language other than English is extremely important for all Australians. It is a concern at the lack of tolerance and understanding some students display towards anything that is not the same as English.

To further improve Languages Education, I believe that all teachers going through university for a teaching degree must study a language for some period of their study time - just as they have to study all other 7 curriculum areas. This way, class room teachers - having the best relationship with the individuals in their class, will be able to offer Languages Other than English within their classroom practice or at least support the LOTE program by highlighting similarities and differences between Languages.

Parents need to be part of Languages lessons, if possible, so that the learning can be extended at home and be seen as something that is valuable.

I have travelled extensively around the world, I only speak Indonesian and English (and some really bad Spanish!) and yet, the skills and strategies I have collected from my Language learning years, put me in great stead to be able to have a go with the local language - something that was appreciated in all countries I visited (except maybe Germany!!)

✍ 62 Parent organisations should canvass the state and federal government bodies to reconsider the teaching of languages in schools as NIT subjects. The System has to fix the problem of availability and time for language studies especially the Junior and Primary Schools which are the foundation for the success of the language education in high school. If the primary students are not properly trained in learning of a language. The program at the high schools are going to be affected. This is the roll on effects.

✍ 63 I also teach students with special needs and I think it is emotionally cruel to expect these students to learn another language when they struggle themselves already with their first language.


I studied a language in high school and have lived for almost 16years in Europe (not in the UK) and strongly disagree that languages should be compulsory education for students in Australia.


We expect so much of students these days, so why should they be forced to learn something they are not interested in and it has so little relevance. It is not like students learning a language in Switzerland for example where the bottle of milk on the kitchen table has information written in French, German and Italian written on the label.


If Australian students need to learn a specific language they will do so later in life when the need arises.


We talk about students learning best when the activity is salient to them – a language other than English is not relevant for many Australian students.
(Contact details supplied)


South Australian Principals said

 **1** The biggest difficulty is the discontinuity between Primary School and High School language provision - both in the specific language delivered and the methodology. This reinforces the perception that LOTE is not important.


 **2** Methodology of teaching a language and the relationship that the teacher has with students is vitally important to success. Our language program is very successful - the language teacher also has other roles in the school and I believe this is part of the success equation.


 **3** It is important that the community at large develop greater understanding of the importance of learning languages. Our children need to be prepared to be competitive in a global marketplace, where they will be working with, living with, interacting with students from European and Asian countries, where the study of 2 or more languages is compulsory through to the end of schooling. Our students will be severely disadvantaged if they are monolingual. Already, we are observing that in England, English people who are monolingual are losing jobs to their French and German colleagues who are multilingual. The multilingual advantage is valued by business and industry.


 **4** We do not offer a language at our school other than relying on HPI - hence if no one is available it does not happen. Have difficulty getting teachers for all areas of the curriculum


 **5** Have an active Policy statement.
Model the learning of languages by asking teachers, Principals to begin learning.
Promote languages learning actively as a way of addressing intercultural understanding, internationalism, and globalisation.
Make it truly equal in the curriculum.
Don't scale it down in ste exams.
Mandate languages learning at all levels and especially entry to TAFE and UNI courses
Praise students who already have a language - instead of cultural cringe and racism
Praise and use bilingual/multilingual staff
Adequately re-train teachers
Offer in country experiences for teachers to update language skills
Offer in country experiences for students


Improve the use of ICT in schools and especially for Languages students.
Update methodological skills in teachers
I could go on
I have been saying these things for over ten years.


 **6** The high quality of the language program that is on offer at this school is due the highly skilled teacher who is passionate about her work. Her teacher and learning program is outstanding. In previous school the quality of the language program has been disappointing because of the lack of skills of the language teachers.

 **7** Any language program is only as good as the teacher. A poor teacher will do more harm to the community's perception and the value placed on learning languages than not having a program at all.

 **8** Even as Principal I am unconvinced of the need to learn another language. I would prefer the time devoted to other priorities. Our LOTE program is very well run but I have witnessed many where it is almost chaos. This is often because it is taught by non classroom teachers. The community as a whole does not value LOTE and students misbehave because they have heard the lesson is a waste of time.
I'd drop it!

 **9** Language provision at present is minimal due to budgetary restraints and is linked to class teacher release (NIT), hence not present during lessons and very little follow up in classes. So we need additional funding to provide extra lessons to do it properly. Right now it's questionable whether any real value is derived.


 **10** Funding of languages is the biggest issue for primary schools. Without increased funding it is not possible to fund a language program more than 1 lesson per week. In reality children need at least two to give languages any credibility.

 **11** It is about time that the Australian Education Systems got serious about supporting the teaching of LOTE from Reception -Year 12. Especially in the early years! It is also about time the Australian education and political leadership valued the teaching of all languages as being our gateway to the world and stopped bringing prejudice into which languages are more or less of value. Australians still offers their country a rich and broad language base

to develop a strong political and economic Australia in both the local and broader international arena.

Educational and Political Leaders need to mature enough so as to value our peoples own strengths particularly cultural and linguistic. They also need to put aside academic and personal prejudices to develop a consistent quality approach to the teaching of Languages in Australian Schools and especially in the Primary and Junior primary area with continuity to Year 12.

South Australian Language Advisors said

 **1** I studied Indonesian from 1991 - 1997 at Port Lincoln High School, then studied Indonesian from 1998 - 2001 at University. Currently, I work in Administration at the School of Languages.

My experience in languages has been very positive. As a languages student, I had enthusiastic teachers/lecturers who were passionate about passing on their knowledge if you were willing to listen. Lesson content eg translations were all culturally educational and relevant, not politically bias.

The hardest thing about learning a language in Australia is that you cannot immerse yourself in the language unless it is spoken at home OR your family has enough money to send you overseas.

After 10 years in the South Australian education system as a student, I would consider my language skills as Average, I am not fluent by any stretch of the imagination but I could manage.

As an SSO on a languages school, our staff have a great passion and enthusiasm for their language. Over the years, student numbers are dwindling in languages such as Persian and Serbian (may be political - parents bias), however, with the influx of the Sudanese community, my school is now teaching Dinka to help with language barriers. My Principal is in full support of introducing new languages if we can get community support and enrolment numbers. She is a great advocate for this school.

In closing, my school doesn't have a parent's voice. Sure they are given the opportunity to be on school council but seriously... how boring!! Our school newsletter is the key informant but it really needs to be vamped up (more informal and enjoyable) rather than reading a hard core novel.

 **2** [Re statements 248, 253 and 302](#)


I would like to point out that, although my ratings are "disagree" and "neutral" , it does - in my opinion - NOT reflect on the language teachers themselves, but on the circumstances in which they have to do their job.

Some examples from my own experience: no LOTE classroom, few and often outdated resources, an annual \$800 budget for 600 students (expected to cover everything for the year including purchase and development of resources/ photocopying), seeing students once a week for 45 or 60 minutes max., no or very limited access to ICT or video room, grouping of beginners and advanced students or 2-3 year levels together (resulting in groups of


more than 30 students), parents and/or colleagues (including people in leadership positions) who model disdain for language learning and/or publicly question its relevance, students who pick up on this and are consequently harder to motivate.

Observations over many years have taught me that the above are not exceptions, rather the rule.


If the other seven areas of study were taught under these circumstances there would be an outcry from parents, ALL teachers and politicians. Everybody would understand that the outcomes could only be limited and nobody would condone this situation nor allow it to continue.

 **3** Languages programs in our state could be strengthened if stronger systematic upgrading of teacher skills were possible on an employer sponsored basis and possibly also with release time provided for the teachers. In addition, many of our teachers of languages do not perform as well as they could because of the conditions under which they work This and general community perception about languages learning impact enormously on the success of languages programs particularly in the primary and junior primary years.

(Contact details supplied) if you would like to follow up on any of my answers.

 **4** I think that languages education could be strengthened:
- through a nationally driven and powerful media campaign on the importance of learning languages and stressing that the reasons for doing so have changed, methodology has changed(vehicle to world peace and understanding).


- learning another language should be part and parcel of all teacher training courses so that delivery is shared and whole school ownership achieved.


 **5** I think the teaching of languages is really important but very difficult given our isolation and our ability to survive on a day to day basis without speaking a second language. We need a rethink and new approach. We need to incorporate ICT fully into languages teaching, promote the benefits to parents, develop strategies for improving teacher continuity and teacher supply and build relationships and exchanges with other countries.

It requires significant effort and coordination, not the band-aid approach we have adopted for decades.



South Australian Tertiary Language teachers said

 **1** I'd better explain my situation. I used to be a teacher of high school French in SA (and have also taught French as a second language in a Pacific country where it is one of the official languages), but currently I do temporary relief teaching in schools (occasionally having a German class). I've also taught one year of primary German (45 minutes or so with each class per week - not the ideal way of learning a language!). More recently I taught some beginners' French at a tertiary level. I've also been involved in language and academic skills support for tertiary students, including NESB students and international students. So I've ticked the tertiary language box, but it doesn't currently fit.

 **2** My concern relates to teacher's professional development. I have been actively involved in Pd and have found that language teachers are willingly and actively involved in their professional development but that state government and institutions are not "language /level specific" enough to affect language teachers' proficiency and professional development in that sphere is lacking. In the case of Spanish language professional development, teachers are offered, for instance, last year, SACSA training. I believe that frameworks are useful if the teacher himself/herself - may achieve the goals expected of students. In South Australia there are a group of keen Spanish language teachers who are very hard working and committed to students. They have required more level specific training and have not been heard. This means that we have teachers who were retrained and who are teaching, but that can not hold a basic conversation. These teachers are also overworked, especially in country areas and they haven't got the real time to take up courses, for instance the DELE courses, to raise their proficiency and competency (cultural and linguistic) and they can't afford to go overseas for an extended period of time, sufficient to improve these areas of their knowledge. I am concerned that Spanish is being neglected around Australia, when in the UK-Asia and the U.S.A- Spanish is acknowledged and supported in elementary and high school levels.


On another note, there are inconsistencies between expectations of the secondary boards in our state (what they expect from year 12 students) and what they evaluate in SSABSA review reports on exams/student performance) i.e 1999/2000. Although examiners expect students to show flexibility in maintaining substantiated conversations-throughout their evaluations they stress language form. There are clearly limitations that arise from these issues. If teachers have a low level of proficiency and lack the support to engage in 'real' PD- how can they perform to a level that will help students' elaborate on their strategies for learning Spanish, to the extent that they develop flexibility and can engage in a spontaneous conversation with the examiner. I believe these tensions could be reduced by increasing research


opportunities for teachers-action research for instance and for the government to offer professional development which is relevant to individuals and that this language and level specific. This has not occurred in the case of Spanish in S.A and it is a shame. I have worked with this group of dedicated teachers and the system is letting them down.

Languages extend individuals, cognitively, affectively and physiologically...but officials seek to value the economic and social gains, devaluing the educational values of languages to the curriculum and lives of individuals. I have faith that this can change though.

Appendix 2F – TASMANIA


Tasmanian Parents said

 1 As the primary school is very small, we do not have the opportunity to have language studies at our school

 2 Currently in the state of Tasmania the profile of languages in new state curriculum documentation is so distressingly low that it is virtually non-existent. This is an appalling oversight of those who ratify and promote our new state curriculum. It saddens me to see languages education again at the bottom of the pile of political priorities. Perhaps parents of language students are too complacent. Perhaps it is the skills of tolerance, patience and empathy which we have developed through our own valuable languages education which render us inert when we actually need to be pushy, vocal and reactive. It is also distressing when we compare ourselves with other states and see that although languages education is somewhat marginalised in other curricula, here in Tasmania the marginalisation is extreme.


Languages education can develop strong values of tolerance, empathy and connectedness as well as promoting the valuing of diversity. In these torrid times of international unrest, the promotion of such positive values is paramountly important.

I don't believe parents and students should be given the choice of whether to participate in languages education in primary and early secondary years. This is not the case for other key curriculum areas such as literacy and numeracy. State and commonwealth education authorities need to consider the needs of our whole nation and mandate languages education, particularly in regions where the value of such education is not understood. In the private education sector, languages education has a high profile. This is an interesting observation and one wonders if parents who choose private education for their children are motivated to do so because of the wider global perspectives which may be promoted, partly through a greater diversity of language education opportunities.


 3 My eldest child is in grade 3 and to my knowledge we have had no LOTE lessons as yet .


 4 My daughter in grade 3 is being taught Indonesian, presumably once a week. I know this because I did parent help there once in my holidays.

My other daughter studies Japanese after school once a week, at the school, by a Japanese woman, but this is something I pay for.
My daughter heard of this class and asked to join. It is not part of the school curriculum. My daughter loves it.


 5 I strongly believe that all children from the start of school should be learning a different language...my child was offered this in her NSW school, but is not offered this in her Tas school.

I would like to see sign language compulsory in all schools. Out of all languages, I believe that this is the most important...I would like to her learn it and I would like my children to learn it.

 6 I would like to see students have a greater choice of languages to learn. Australia has a wealth of other languages in the culture of its citizens. It should be possible, and I believe it would be very valuable, to encourage students to learn any language which would receive community support in a school. In Hobart such languages could include any of: Greek, Polish, Italian, Chinese, Dutch, Spanish, Arabic, French and German among others. This may seem too hard, but we do not consider it too difficult to give students the opportunity to learn a wide variety of musical instruments. Giving students such opportunities would maximise community support, and make the most of the students' motivation, which is the most important factor in language learning. I believe this would be much more effective than having one or two languages determined by outside authorities which students must choose from, regardless of whether they have any interest in the particular language. Some communities already provide opportunities to learn via Saturday school, and it would be valuable to encourage such efforts and make them part of the school community. This would add greatly to the wealth of language skills in the Australian population, improve community cohesiveness and maximise Australia's use of a valuable resource. We have the potential to be one of the most language rich countries in the world, rather than remaining relatively language poor because we do not recognize and value this resource.
(Contact details supplied)


 7 When children attend a 3 teacher school, language is not a priority and is definitely not always accessible. One of our teachers does do language work with the upper primary grades but nothing at all is done with the lower primary.
I went to school at a time when my first introduction was in grade 7 to language class (French) I picked it up well, and others did too. I also think

that English must be grounded and come naturally before taking on another language. So, primary school is probably not the place for it.

 **8** My son goes to a District School (Kinder - Yr.10) where Japanese is the only Language taught. He experienced a compulsory term of Japanese in Yr 3 of 1 lesson per week. There was then a compulsory repeat of this in G.4 and G.5 . These were considered 'taster' courses. In G.5 students could elect to study Japanese. These students have a full afternoon 1x per week and miss out on another subject. These students are strongly encouraged to then continue with language through to G.10. which for many years has been with the same teacher. Hence there is continuity for these students.

My personal opinion is that languages in Primary School/Junior Secondary should only be for students who are performing at a good level in their English literacy. That is, languages should be used as an extension choice for these students, while the remaining students spend extra time working on their English. I was concerned that my son who had deficits in his reading, spelling, writing abilities in English at this time was learning Japanese - real waste of time for him and other students in the class. Given the Japanese and many European countries put a huge emphasis on learning English, I found it ironic that our own students were struggling with it and being taught another language!!


Language for students in G.9 & 10 should be offered as an elective subject, sothat only students interested are involved.


 **9** Acceptance of other cultures does not happen through language only. It happens from curiosity and exposure to people. We have both on TV, the internet and within our community. My preference would be to concentrate on sound English, (grammar, spelling, pronunciation) and then if that is in place have the option of another language. Employment of staff requires presentation and the skills involved as above. Who would want to employ a person who has poor communication skills, cannot write clearly, spell or grasp the meaning of a conversation because they haven't been exposed to the English language enough to understand the concepts and language used? To many 'young people' its seems, English is a second language. My personal experience (through moving schools) I did not find out that English spelling had rules to follow. I thought I had to just learn each word. My oldest son found spelling and grammar very difficult as he had a small learning disability and he was required to learn Italian. He is now 22 and he doesn't remember it. But so many hours were wasted (in my opinion) when extra English would have been more useful. My mother studied German at school and all she uses is to count to ten. If acceptance of other cultures is the main aim of other languages, why not study it as a study of societies. If another


language has to be taught (they have so much to learn now and not much time to be children) why not teach sign language. Its something that would benefit society in so many ways. Communicating with the non-hearing, the disabled, the industrial deaf and most of us when we get older. Thank you for allowing me to have a say.


 **10** I am concerned that in our new Tasmanian curriculum framework, LOTE subject areas are not expressly mentioned. This is an oversight which I hope will shortly be rectified.

I would like to see every primary school child required to learn basic conversation skills in at least two languages, and this to be followed with at least one compulsory LOTE subject throughout high school.


 **11** I have four children and they all learned two languages through Primary School (compulsory) and one (their choice) in Year 7(also compulsory). Three were comfortable with the language tuition (and had a degree of natural flair, i.e. were able to get the right accent), but one loathed attending, had no natural ability and wasted 9 years trying (Kinder, Prep, years 1 - 7. I believe all should have the opportunity to see if they like it, but I find the compulsory nature of these programs somewhat frustrating particularly in Year 7. (After three years it would, I believe become clear whether or not a child would like/should continue learning a language(s).


 **12** I think that my children's school is an exception, and I feel that languages are becoming less of a priority in primary and secondary schools. I think this is horrifying as they teach us so much about other cultures, other ways of thinking, broaden the children's understanding of the world and help with their own understanding of language- especially grammar. It, the learning of languages, requires discipline and commitment, both of which are sorely needed in our society.


 **13** I believe that access to LOTE is important to students however I am not happy with the quality of the language program at our school, I would be doubtful if after 6 years either of my children could engage in the simplest of conversations in the language taught. They may have some stronger understanding of the culture of the country which they are studying but without an ability to speak the language I would be doubtful of the depth of

 **14** LOTE was ended a couple of years ago in our school, being a parent on our school association and involved with parents & friends, LOTE is an important subject that needs to be taught in our schools, not enough


information about it is being passed on to our parents (in our school) so majority of them wouldn't know that language is a subject that can be taught at schools

 **15** Languages are not included in the whole year and to my knowledge are not offered to each grade and only one language is offered. I think that if language is going to be included in the learning then it should be from the start of grade 1 and be offered throughout the year as a normal subject and continue throughout the child's school life. The student should have to learn a compulsory language in the early grades but then from middle school (grade 5) onwards they should be able to select a language from a list of 5.

 **16** A number of years ago at our local primary school the subject of LOTE came up in a P&F meeting. I was disturbed by the large number of parents who could see no value in LOTE and felt it was provided at the expense of 'literacy and numeracy'. I think the statement was something like - 'What's the point of the children learning another language if they can't read or write in English.'
(Contact details supplied)

 **17** My child has just started reception so I am still getting to know the system etc.


There does not seem to be enough LOTE teachers.
There does not seem to be any uniformity about delivery or content.
It seems hard to say it is important when it all seems so random or arbitrary.

 **18** I am a state school supporter and when we moved to this area we were happy that the local state high school taught the language we were interested in (Japanese). However it has since been taken out of the curriculum. I was also pleased because the state primary school that our Kinder and Yr 2 children attend was at least teaching another language (Indonesian). However last year that was also withdrawn to 4/5/6 students only. We are told it is a funding problem. It certainly is - as now we have to pay for weekly language classes outside the school system.
The main reasons for LOTE education, especially at primary level, in my opinion are not economic or job related. Learning a LOTE is good for every child's English language development and their awareness of cultures outside their own world.


✍ 19 A language other than English (LOTE) should be a compulsory part of a curriculum. It is as important as English or Maths. Unfortunately this is not happening. At the moment, a student choosing maths or engineering oriented subjects cannot chose a LOTE because LOTE subjects appear in the same block as the other ones. I think a language needs to be offered in at least 4 blocks. This way students who would like to study languages can do it without too many sacrifices.


✍ 20 I am completely satisfied with the Language Curriculum in this school. The teacher is highly qualified and has a great rapport with the students. This is important in relating cultural differences to the students and assists in their understanding of languages other than English.

Tasmanian Students said


 **1** I am definitely enjoying the challenge of learning another language and the reason for my answer of "Strongly Disagree" to the question, "do you think students 'muck up' more in a language class?" is that "mucking up" is relative to "succeeding". Learning a language is much more interactive than most other subjects and although students may get more answers wrong, at the same time it can be said that they get more answers right. So anyone who answers 'agree' to that question must therefore also answer 'agree' to a question such as: "Do you think students succeed more in a language class?" So I answered as if asked about the ratio of right and wrong answers in a language class, in which case it is no different to any other subject.


Although many of the good reasons for learning a language do not appeal to the average Australian (English-speaking) student, one reason which I feel should be more strongly emphasised is the fact that it gives you an advantage in the future when looking for particular jobs. Many people are more successful in their career after having learned a language and some even get paid more for every language that they know other than English (or their mother-tongue). This reason WOULD appeal to the average Australian student and may help raise the number of students who learn a language, in turn raising the number of students who care about the learning of other languages in Australia.


 **2** The Students at our school do not support other languages very well which disadvantages other students from doing their very best. Students in 8, 9 and 10 who want to study a language have to do it online as there are not enough students to make a class. Students in Year 7 did not even get a full year of another Language.

 **3** Hey I think that learning different languages can be pretty boring but if you try a little harder and put effort in or work it pays off.


 **4** I THINK WE SHOULD BE LEARNING MORE ABOUT THE CULTURE THEN SPEAKING AND LANGUAGES


 **5** I think culture more than the language
I don't really find my language very exciting sometimes! But when we do a fun thing it is real fun

 6 I think us as students should have more of a choice of what to study. I also think that we should have better teachers for teaching languages and that there should be more facilities to learn other languages out side of school because most student find it hard to lean while under pressure by their class mates


 7 I think we should be able to choose out of 2 languages to learn.

 8 I like learning languages but it can sometimes be boring


 9 I think it is a great opportunity to learn about other cultures and their way of life. It is amazing what you can learn. It think it's great!


 10 I think it is very important to learn another language other than English. But some people just don't think it's important. Lots of people in our school don't like the languages that are taught at are school because we have no say what so ever.

I think we should learn a language and if you want to continue then you should.
The main thing is we should have more say.

 11 I think more year 12 students should be studying other languages other than English so it might help them with their careers in the future and can experience how interesting other languages really are.

 12 I think every student should learn a language

 13 I enjoy learning languages my favourite language besides English is Japanese

 14 I think that the language Japanese is very fun although some people in the class don't really like it
The reasons why I like it is because I practice my speeches and things like that mostly every night

✍ 15 My mum supports me a lot and I have just been in a Japanese speaking competition and I thought I went well (but I don't do well in front of judges!!!)

✍ 16 I think that we should have a wider selection on the languages we learn at school, and that we should have a say in what we would like to learn in our language classes.

✍ 17 We need to do more educational things and make sure everybody gets a turn. Like the Japanese speech competition, some people can't speak Japanese very well and they should get to do something different.
Thank-you

✍ 18 I think that my Japanese teacher is very mean and I hate learning Japanese. Because it is stupid.

✍ 19 I think in schools the language curriculum could be strengthened.


✍ 20 I dislike the learning of languages greatly at my school. This is mainly because my teacher(s) are incompetent. For one thing the teachers I have don't tell us when homework assignments are due and do not warn us about up coming exams etc. My LOTE teacher is also a very "particular" person as she expects perfection even though we are only students.


✍ 21 I dislike Japanese, no I HATE IT!!


✍ 22 I think when it comes to the students choice of when and what year they chose to do a language it is up to them. As yes, learning a language will get you a good job when you apply for it. Language should stay a curriculum for the years 3-8 and then beyond grade 8 it should be the student's choice.

✍ 23 When it comes to learning a language at a certain age, I disagree, because in grade 12 and younger, we are old enough to make our own decisions on what we want to do. Some say that studying a different language will get us a better job, and if that is true then so be it, but I think that learning a language can be very demanding on some students that have other work to do, such as maths, English and science, that also need a lot of practice.


good luck with the survey


 24 I HATE JAPANESE, HATE, HATE, HATE, HAATE,
HAAA
AAA
AAte
it!!
!! And particularly my
teacher, please sack her, please help!!!! She breeds marijuana fields, and is a
walking cigarette ashtray, her name is (name of teacher and school) and is a
particularly hanus breed of bitch!!!! Help she is coming back with the
whip!!!!

 25 My teacher teaches us very badly and the majority of students do not understand the work that is set or the homework. If our normal teacher is away we are given a sheet of instructions and a relief teacher will sit in for the class while the students have no idea what to do. There is no help except the teacher. The exchange student from Japan makes more sense than our actual teacher when asked for help.

 26 omg help me my Japanese teacher eats the students one by one in front of the rest of the class when we fail!!!!

We respect the language; we just don't respect the teacher!

 27 I think that small amounts of the language over a long time is better than a lot of language in a short time. If you learn an Asian language, you should do half culture, half language. I get bored of just doing language.

 28 I believe that learning a new language is vital to maintaining relations with other nations and helps us to realise the importance and understanding of the other culture.


Learning a new language should not have to be forced on the students of schools of any kind. We should all have a say in what language what we want to learn and not have it based on what the majority of the government wants or what the majority of the school board wants.


Learning new languages is a great experience and if we were to ever travel to the country of the language we learnt, we would not feel as intimidated and

helpless because we would be able to communicate with the other people of that country.

Not only do we learn about languages, but we also learn about the basics of their culture; what is a insulting or complimenting gesture, their habits that to us would seem out of the ordinary and so forth.

We should learn a new language not because we are forced to but to enjoy and realise the value of being able to communicate, whether it be it by words or signs.

 **29** I think that at our school need to spend more time on Japanese in our time table. As we get older these Languages well help us, because I would like to travel and have a job that involves talking to different people.

 **30** I believe that learning another language is vital as a part of my school's curriculum. That it helps me in other subjects without me realising it, and that it will help me get a job once I leave school. That without this language I wouldn't do so well in other subjects, that I wouldn't get a decent job once I leave school.


So in conclusion I think that having a language is an excellent idea and that it should stay.

 **31** Well...


When I am older I would like to travel the world and see it in a different perspective. And I think that learning a language would help me a great deal.


But on the other side I hate learning, I find it hard to learn it and at our school we really don't do much culture work. As well as we don't do hands on stuff or anything and I think that hands on could really help me learn Japanese.


Also in our time table we don't have a lot of time for Japanese it is always rushed. Also in primary school I learnt Italian but in grade 8 I did Japanese, this is my second year in learning Japanese and yes I am finding it hard but I am doing great and I am passing. So it is not impossible to learn a language in 2 years and pass because I am doing it but I think that this school could be more supportive of Japanese and let us do more practical work!!!

 **32** Well if we had more languages to learn and more to choose from, I think students would have more of a choice and they would say they would like to learn this language. We also need more time to study in because in the

time that we have most of the time we are interrupted or the lesson is cancelled which makes it harder on the students to make time for there tests.

 **33** I think that if we had more choices about the languages we get to learn it would be a lot better. This would be because the students would be able to choose their favourite subject and would probably actually enjoy it instead of just feeling like they have to do it. I also think that more time should be allocated. At our school we only have about 2 50 minute lessons a week and this is not enough to learn a language quite well and enjoy it. If we had more time we would get through a lot more and really study it thoroughly. We also do not get enough study time for tests because our language classes would always be the ones that are interrupted and the ones that we would have to miss out on if we have other things on during the day. It is too hard to learn all the characters (for Japanese) plus learning all the sentence formats and everything else and then only have 2 lessons a week and having to do the tests (which come up regularly).

 **34** I think that we should have 3 or 4 completely different subjects to choose from. Then we could have a trial year were we have to do all of them. Then the next year could decide which one we like the best. That way I think that people would do better because they would enjoy learning it so they would study more and do well. I also think people should have the choice of weather or not they want to learn another subject, because some people may not like learning languages. So then they should have another subject in its place like maths or something. I also think that we should have a lot more outings like going and having lunch and then learning about the kind of food and how you reply. I think that way it would make it way more fun and interesting.

 **35** I think that we should have Japanese classes more times a week for the students who strongly want to continue with the subject. It should be nearly just as important as other subjects such as maths and science so I think they should have more time during school for us to learn these subjects.

I hate learning other languages it is gay its too hard and boring I fall asleep in these classes!

 **36** I hate doing languages because it is too much work thanx 4 listening to me

 **37** I like school it is so cool

✍ 38 I think that although the quality of the course is good, not enough classes are used, so that they conflict with other subjects.

Tasmanian Language Teachers said

✍ 1 I fear for the success of the implementation and acceptance of the National Statement and Plan unless it is mandated. In reality, if the Essential Learnings had not been mandated (especially with all the problems with it here in Tasmania), I wonder whether it would have been taken on by schools or accepted by parents. This will be exacerbated by the fact that our curriculum is being “refined” here in Tasmania and the draft document shows that languages will longer be regarded as a KLA. This seems to be completely contradictory to the aspirations of the National Plan, sends completely the wrong message out to the public, and puts languages on a very precarious footing in this state.

This being the situation, the problem I face more than any other is the lack of knowledge and belief in the value of language learning. Therefore, I strongly believe that one of the first areas of the National Statement and Plan that should have been put out to tender and acted upon was the Promotion and Advocacy one, not only to the public, but especially to curriculum heads in all schools and sectors. I believe that in many cases, even people at this level are not aware of the research into why language learning is so valuable, and based on this, don't have a firm belief in its importance. Until there is this belief at this level (instead of just regarding them as another elective they have to find time for in the crowded curriculum), why would the general public take on this belief? They are the ones that can really make a difference and that should be targeted. Parents and students will say in the same breath that many probably won't use Maths or Science in their careers but that they believe these subjects should be in the curriculum. When asked why, they say such things as “They have always been part of the curriculum so they must be important” and “Schools know what they are doing and know what is valuable for children's education”. This shows that most parents trust that educationalists are specialists in their field and accept their decisions on what is “good” for students' education. If local government and school hierarchies were seen to regard languages as just as educationally important and promoted this, the community at large would, over time, also come to believe this as they do with the other academic subjects. However, the public would need to see this “belief” backed up by the actions of curriculum officers in such things as time allocations in the timetable, placing languages in the same electives basket such as non-academic subjects such as Food and Textiles, lack of promotion at course-information evenings, as they are all seen as indicators of how important a subject is deemed.

Based on the above, I think that the way the National Plan is promoted will be crucial. Promotion to school leaders has to come from above as through my experience, advocacy by single language teachers in schools has very little effect. At present, much of the National Plan is being pitched at language


teachers and educators. This is preaching to the converted. Many principals and curriculum heads don't even know the National Statement and Plan exist, and when the booklet was distributed last year, it just went on a shelf somewhere and was never read by the precise people that needed to be "preached" to.

Regarding promotion to the general public, when languages were first introduced as a KLA, I believe that while the reasons given for its introduction by the government were all valid, too much emphasis was placed on those with which I believe school students, the general public and school communities don't readily connect e.g. good for the economy. There was very little emphasis placed on those reasons I see as the really important ones and which I think the general public would also. The aspect I would like to see highly promoted (apart from those such as intercultural knowledge, literacy etc), not only as a teacher, but one I would have been more convinced by as a parent is the proven research showing that those students who study languages achieve better in all their other subjects than those who don't. When I get the chance to say this to individual parents, they mostly say they were not aware of this and feel it is important. They often ask too why this information has not been made more broadly known. It is generally accepted by parents and students that children should study subjects such as Maths and Science and that they are core subjects because they are "good for brain development". Based on this, the fact that languages have been shown to be just as important for brain development as these other academic subjects should also be a major promotional tool.


While I think students and parents should, in the Junior Secondary years at any rate, be encouraged to focus on the value of subjects for academic development rather than for careers, the government also gave increased job opportunities as a rationale for introducing languages as a KLA. This is undoubtedly so but again, perhaps through poor promotion, most parents and students think that languages are not much use unless one is going to take up a career in tourism, translating or teaching. Parents and students give the reason that subjects such as Maths and Science need to be in the curriculum is that they "keeps students' options open". If they believed that languages are equally effective in increasing their options, this narrow attitude might change. To combat this attitude, I always challenge my students to put "second language" or more specifically "Japanese" as a key word search into job-search sites on the internet to see the number and range of jobs which are advertised as needing people with language skills. These range from sandwich hands to lawyers. (This mainly applies to mainland Australia though which doesn't help my cause here in Tasmania.) This doesn't necessarily get through to parents however who quite often make students' subject choices for them. If vocational guidance councilors as well as curriculum officers in schools were targeted by promotion also, there is more chance of this aspect being promoted to students and parents.


One more thought:

There were universities at one time that credited students who had studied a language with more points over and above those points gained in their pre-tertiary exams. I know of some students who would not have gained entrance to the courses they wanted to graduate in without these extra points. University-bound pre-tertiary students attach great importance to the points they gain and if universities once again had this in place, it might be a major draw card for studying languages to pre-tertiary level. In addition, if language teaching and learning becomes more valued and grows in schools, students taking up teaching who have taken languages to this level may also be more likely to add language teaching methodology to their package, especially

 **2** Yes, I do believe that the teaching and learning of Languages can and should be strengthened in Australia. The Australian nation needs to:

- * improve the language proficiency of its languages teachers. The Endeavour Fellowship is an excellent programme. This needs to be made available to more teachers and the duration needs to be increased.
- * engage in a large publicity campaign to shake up the monolingual mindset complacency about learning languages and about intercultural competency. It is just not good enough in a globalised world to grow up monolingually. Australians are missing out on learning one of the most vital skills for life. Monolingualism fosters narrow mindedness. Learning another language is the best way to gain intercultural competencies which include gaining a critical insight in one's own culture as well as in another culture. We need good intercultural communicators.
- * realise that fostering language learning in schools might mean extra funding for schools to run small language classes (where language learning is not compulsory)

 **3** Some of your questions were too general to answer. For example, what kind of special needs? Do you mean the special needs students in my school, or in all schools. I am reluctant to speak in such general terms, or compare my experience with that of an unknown 'other'. In these situations, I answer with a 'don't know'.

 **4** I really feel that not enough is being done to stress the importance of language in schools. I feel that language is treated as an "extra" and not an essential. The new national plan for languages sounds great in theory, but I think it will be the same old story and languages will still be on the outer. A

plan like this is going to need a lot of funding and teacher training which I do not see happening.

✍ 5 The inclusion of special needs students in language classes needs to be considered on a case by case basis as the term covers a wide range of learning difficulties which may or may not impact on language learning.

On the whole, my school is strongly supportive of languages in terms of provision, timetabling and resources. However, after discussions with other teachers I do not believe that this is the norm. A great deal depends on the leadership of the school and the leadership and support provided by state and federal educational jurisdictions.

✍ 6 I found it difficult to reply to some of these questions in relation to my own school context as we are located in a very mono-cultural environment. Therefore, it is hard for me to involve native Indonesian speakers in our program as none live in my school community and few in close proximity. I believe that involving a native speaker in the program would be of immense value, just an issue of access in the way.

Our school has been offering Indonesian to grades 3-6 for approximately ten years now. The students accept this as part of the curriculum and the parents appear to also, as I have never heard any opposition to this as I have in other areas. I am not sure why this is, as the area is a rural community, with no cultural diversity and few members who travel to the country. I am not sure whether this translates to supporting languages learning though, rather not opposing it, if that makes sense. We are about to embark on a project exploring values education through Indonesian language and arts and will support some students from Indonesia to spend time with us in our schools. It will be interesting to see how the community supports this project and will hopefully help to strengthen the relevance of languages learning for the community.

Our main problem, as languages teachers in the DoE, is the curriculum review and the absence of a place for languages within it. We are very well supported by languages officers but the government makes it very hard for us to feel like we are valued or that our work is valued. This marginalisation of languages education in regards to the curriculum will also be detrimental to community acceptance and ongoing support and sustainability of languages programs within the state.


(Contact details supplied)

✍ 7 I believe students learn languages better if they learn it often - one lesson of 40 minutes a week is not enough if they are to memorise vocabulary, script and so on; I spend much of my lesson time in memorising activities, so


that it takes a long time before I can move on to a new topic. We need more time for songs, games, and culture activities.


I think the best outcome for a primary student is a positive attitude towards other languages & cultures, irrespective of proficiency when they start high school, & I believe many low ability students can still enjoy languages & achieve in them when they cannot in other areas, & this improves their self esteem. I teach Japanese & have one special needs student who regularly bows & says 'konnichi wa ' when she sees me, & I think this is a success story. However there are other special needs students who are best removed; it should be judged individually.

(Contact details supplied)

 **8** Students are often given the choice of say, language or sport, or some other 'soft' subject. Human nature being what it is, most will choose the easier option.


The students that do choose a language are enthusiastic, but the timetable setup (in my school) does not allow enough time for the subject, especially as students have no, or very little knowledge of grammar.

 **9** I would just like to comment that questions about "Australian schools", "Australian teachers", "Australian students" etc. are ones that I will always answer with "don't know" because I don't feel I can generalise from what I know about my school and its community.


 **10** I work part-time as a Languages Coordinator for the government system as well as teaching part-time in an independent school. The school where I teach has a staff that is extremely supportive of the Languages program and it makes a HUGE difference. The students begin the program in Prep which is a great time to start I believe. Sometimes the classroom teachers visit the language classes and support the learning by including target language songs as part of the music program, for instance. Junior students play games in the target language in some of their regular classes.

That support by the whole staff is invaluable.


(Contact details supplied)

 **11** I am not originally trained as a language teacher but picked up languages as I was learning a language for my own interest. I have found support from within languages excellent. At times it has be frustrating because support has not been given from all people in my school. Due to timetabling and staffing I feel that languages don't always get the support


they deserve. Students have strengths in many areas, we need to make sure we give them all the opportunities we possibly can.

 **12** With respect to the inclusion of special needs children, I think it depends on the child. I have had success with some of these, for example one who regularly bows & greets me in Japanese. Even if this is all she can do I think it is a success, and good for her self esteem. Another, not special needs but low ability child, was the first in her class to count to 20 in Japanese, owing to being taught by her brother, & continues to do well - again, good for her self esteem. I can adapt my programs to suit these children, if I feel they are gaining from it. However there are some who may become frustrated & might therefore misbehave, & could benefit from extra literacy help, for example.

I am very concerned that children's horizons seem very narrow, they have little knowledge of the larger world, and they have narrow vision as well. By this I mean the attitude 'why don't they do it like we do?', and that everyone should learn English. English is very hard to learn & not all the world has the chance. It is an increasingly global society these children are being educated for, and they can no longer say that other countries don't relate to them, or be sure that they will not need languages for their future lives. I don't think they need in primary school to become fluent in languages, but to be familiar with other cultures and positive in their outlook towards them and the idea of communicating in a language other than English.

 **13** We had a strong French program at my school when I took 3 years leave recently. On my return, there were no languages offered. I have begun a small intercultural language program team teaching with a core teacher in grade 8 (Chinese) to build up interest in a languages program again. We are offering French and/or Chinese as an option next year in grades 9 and 10 in an effort to raise the profile of languages again. Compulsory languages in grade 7 worked, but compulsory languages in grade 8 did not work. With the range of options competing for student interest we decided to offer semester long taster courses to begin to rebuild the program. There is limited support for the importance of languages at our school - the principal believes it is not relevant to most of the students in our socio economic intake area. He believes on line language learning is the way to go. Some people in our community send their children into Hobart so they can access language programs (and other educational options). The students in our mini Mandarin program in Grade 8 are fully engaged with and loving the program so far, but at the moment it is a novelty for them. We will see how many commit to choosing languages as an option next year. We chose Mandarin over French because we thought it would be more


relevant to our students, plus we wanted to break down some of their pre-conceived racist ideas about "Asia".


 **14** It is vital to have all students learning a language other than English. It MUST be compulsory to learn a language from the early childhood years. It is the sponge like ears that soak it up as though it is natural.


If we are to be part of this global village in a responsible and understanding manner, experience in a 2nd language helps us to know what it is like to 'not understand'. It helps us to work out other ways of communication. It helps us understand how languages and communication work.


In a world that has intolerance and racism, it is vital our children understand other cultures. Unfamiliarity breeds fear which breeds intolerance. Students with low literacy skills can benefit in a foreign language class as the way the language is taught is often different - it often focuses more on visual prompts, listening and speaking. It may help them understand how language works in a way they can relate to.

Most of all - we must all maintain an open mind!!

 **15** Students enrolling at our school often dismiss language learning as an option for them, in favour of what they would call 'more vocational' subjects. I would love the learning of languages other than English to have a higher profile in our community. I believe language learning is a powerful way for students to build personal esteem, develop cognitively and to broaden their understanding of other cultures and the world. Sadly, much of the drive and enthusiasm in favour of language learning in Australia has diminished in recent years.

 **16** I would love to have native Indonesian speakers involved in my teaching, but there are none in our rural Tasmania.

 **17** The Education Department in Tasmania needs to strengthen Languages profile by applying the principles outlined in the National statement and plan for languages. There needs to be better communication between primary and secondary schools with language learning opportunities to be balanced between primary and secondary education. For example, many primary schools teach a language that is not taught at the secondary school most students plan on attending. The current Tasmanian Curriculum (formally: Essential Learnings) fails to acknowledge Languages as a defined area of curriculum. This is a great concern for the profile and strengthening of Language learning in Tasmania.

 **18** I believe that as a language teacher I am in the best school in Tasmania and having taught in many others I am well aware of being in Nirvana compared to other languages teachers.

Our school has a strong language focus.

We have 5 sister schools around the world in the 4 languages that we offer - French German Chinese Japanese. We have exchange programmes with all of these schools.

We have good class sizes and strong retention rates in languages and language learning is seen as a "given" here.

We have 6 FT teachers and more than 6 PT teachers of languages in addition to a native speaker programme.

We have many of the requirements that are acknowledged for creating a good language learning environment - well qualified teachers, strong community support, students who acknowledge the value of learning languages, commitment to languages by senior staff in the School etc.

Having taught in many government and non-government schools around the state and having researched language learning on Japan, I am very aware of how lucky we are in our School.


 **19** I recently attended The Languages Seminar in Canberra.

It is very exciting to see how different groups are keen to help Languages teachers in the providing of a variety of programmes.

I would like to reiterate though that the emphasis put on interculturality is of concern to me. I strongly believe that we have to teach the mechanics of the Language first insisting on the acquiring of vocabulary and grammar. I have just finished assessing students orally for the TCE in Tasmania and I was shocked at the lowering of knowledge. Where are we going wrong?

The culture is the icing on the cake and if we are not careful, Languages will be put on the same level as Social Sciences and multicultural studies.


(Contact details supplied)


 **20** This survey misses one of the key aspects of language teaching and learning that is always overlooked in studies. That is, that language studies cannot exist alone as a subject in the school. Rather, their success occurs when a holistic approach is applied; classroom language learning. School exchanges and sister school relationships, partnerships with community organisations and ethnic communities, and active support for the promotion and realisation of cultural opportunities. Unfortunately, many language teachers are like their colleagues, process workers within their schools who will take advantage of cultural opportunities or connections when they appear, but are unwilling to take the time or make the effort to become involved in external organisations that might sponsor such events or activities. Just as with professional development, many teachers appear to be consumers rather than


participants in the whole experience of learning extending beyond the classroom. A senior support colleague in Victoria has said much the same; the teachers all turn up to the workshops when there are ideas or resources they can take back and put into the classroom. However, there is far less enthusiasm for examination of the fundamental issues of language teaching and learning.

What also must be noted, and it isn't in this survey, is that language teaching remains a largely female dominated area and that affects both the perception of its relevance amongst males, and its management. If principals are mainly males, and females dominate language teaching, the likelihood of a language skilled principal decreases.

This survey looks at some significant areas, but in the absence of these two factors, I believe it will be incomplete. Please look at some of the unpalatable areas instead of those that have been covered before. There have been many motherhood statements in national profiles and documents etc., but the issue is translation onto the ground and into reality.


 **21** I believe that parents often turn their own children off language learning because of their own school and life experiences. Religious issues and the Bali bombings have led to a marked decline in student interest in our area, where once our students couldn't wait to go to Bali and use their Indonesian. Whilst all our feeder schools have Indonesian, we are moving to a choice between French or Indonesian in Year 7 in 2007 - so far only 1 student has opted for Indonesian. I don't know whether that indicates that the students want to learn another language or that after 4 years of Indonesian they want a change. It will be interesting to see whether there is a marked change in student behaviour when they have been given the choice of language that they will study in year 7.

 **22** Due to the difficulties in offering a variety of language courses at my school - we do not have sufficient numbers to warrant this - students who wish to study a language beyond grade 7 now do so online and I support this educational service which is offered through the Tasmanian Online Campus.


 **23** Parents could ask principals & teachers about language education in their school.
Students need more frequent language lessons (at least three a week to make language learning really progress)
Teachers could be encouraged (even sponsored) to visit the country where their language is spoken at regular intervals (preferably at least every five years)
Small Class sizes should be supported in order to maximise learning for those students who are interested and willing.



Tasmanian Principals said


 **1** It is very evident that learning a LOTE - any language - teaches children a lot more than just words. Learning how to learn a language equips them in ways that are not always tangible or measurable.


My school teaches French from Prep to Grade 6. The correlations with English illuminate children's learning of their primary language dramatically. We teach Indonesian as a second LOTE (in addition to French) in Grades 5 and 6. This is because study of an Asian language and culture has benefits for understanding the society and culture in which we live.


 **2** Our students from Grades 4 - 6 study LOTE for approximately 40 minutes per week; classroom teachers remain in the room with the specialist teacher who spends less than a full day at school (0.15), due to low resourcing. She takes 5 classes in that time and does a fantastic job!

The LOTE program in Tasmania started in response to Commonwealth funding some years ago for all students from Grade 3 upwards. As the Commonwealth funding was scaled back, so has the program been scaled back in schools. We would like to offer the program to Grade 3 as we did initially, but cannot fund the additional time.

Our LOTE teacher works in 4 schools over 4 days seeing around 150 students in each school - that is quite a workload. She combines language learning with cultural study; however, the LOTE program exists in a vacuum, with little supporting teaching as part of the normal classroom program. A visiting specialist teacher also finds classroom discipline more difficult as there is little opportunity for follow up, and also, she has to become familiar with a lot of children. This creates issues for comprehensive reporting and assessment too.

 **3** In every school I have taught, both government and independent, I have felt that many parents see LOTE as a low priority. I have even known of parents over-ruling their child's choice of LOTE in preference to e.g Advanced Maths or a Science etc.

 **4** I think the quality of language teaching in a school is dependant on the teacher concerned. In our school we are fortunate to have an exceptional teacher who has provided an excellent program for our school from Prep to 10.

 **5** The key seems to be to start as young as possible. It is good for 5 and 6 year olds for example, to commence their second language learning if they

have not already done so... It is at this age that some of the cultural issues can be addressed as well.

Appropriate training for LOTE teachers is another issue of critical importance if LOTE programmes are going to be effective.

Thanks for the opportunity to be involved in the survey.

Tasmanian Language Advisors said

✍ 1 It is time languages were properly funded and resourced by Federal and State Governments. We live in a multi cultural society and yet we pay lip service to learning others cultures and language. Until Principals and Government push the importance of language we are going to keep putting their study on the back burner.

✍ 2 Thank you for the opportunity to participate in this survey. I think that the responses will provide valuable information but we also need to consider the complexity of the factors affecting the teaching and learning of languages in our schools. Raising awareness of the issues and involving communities in the debate will be crucial to the survival of languages in our schools. I believe they are in a very vulnerable position and it will take a collective effort and responsibility to move forward.

✍ 3 Some things that would help strengthen language learning in Australian schools would be:

1. Follow the guidelines / standards for excellent language programs in terms of the time allocation and space and support given at a school level.
2. Mandate that all primary teachers who are training must pick up a language during the years of their University primary education training. The level required for teaching primary students would not be too demanding and ongoing professional learning could maintain and improve those teachers' skills.

This would mean that staffing of primary school language programs would be much easier, when primary teachers can teach their own (and possibly other classes in the school by swap arrangement) then the flexibility of learning is enhanced, and you avoid the 'part-time itinerant in three or four schools in a week' problem.

As bulk numbers of teachers retire (which will start to happen soon, you would soon solve the problem of finding qualified teachers in primary and raise the profile of language learning.

3. Provide incentives for teachers without a language to re-train. This can often be by paying for the courses (or some of them) and by providing some time incentives e.g. one afternoon relief a fortnight or something. Many


experienced teachers are looking for new challenges to re-invigorate their teaching.

4. Actively seek links with business and employers to show them the worth of employees who have a language so that it becomes an advantageous thing in any business dealing with the public (tourism) or export or innovation for that matter. Encourage positive discrimination for employees with one or more languages (other than English). It shows all sorts of things about attitudes, determination, learning skills etc - not just that they can speak or understand another language.

5. Encourage university courses to include at least some languages units so that students going on to Uni can see that it is worthwhile having studied a language in high school and college.

6. Lots and lots of positive news stories and promotion, promotion and more promotion. Stories about role models who speak more than one language e.g. Robert Dessaix, Adam Hill (from Spicks and Specks).

(Contact details supplied)

 **4** Knowing that effective learning best occurs when curriculum content is relevant and meaningful to students I am appalled that teaching a language other than English is ever made compulsory. Many young people believe it has no relevance to them. They generally do not come into contact with an alternative language in their everyday lives and many doubt they will ever have the opportunity to use another language. Plus, which language? How can any one language give any guarantee re future job opportunities? As an adult studying another language through choice I am loving it but as a teacher who tried through innovative means to inspire classes to be motivated to learn a language in a school in which this was compulsory, I felt an ongoing sense of frustration, as did those students who could see no relevance whatsoever. It seems the greatest supporters of language teaching are the language teachers themselves or those from higher socio-economic backgrounds where international travel is a realistic possibility and the learning of English is not full of confusion.

Tasmanian Tertiary Language Teachers said

✍ 1 I feel I didn't answer very well as I don't know enough about the school situation.

If you would like to contact me about tertiary matters my contact details are:


(Contact details supplied)

✍ 2 Tertiary Institutions Training prospective languages teachers should:

- * provide the resources for students to have both language specific methodology training as well as general languages teaching methodology training.
- * be strict in enforcing qualification rules, i.e. a prospective student who has not had enough language training should not be admitted to a course aimed at training prospective languages teachers.


Appendix 2G – VICTORIA


Victorian Parents said

 **1** I can only comment on the LOTE studies my children do at their school. Both are in grade 1 and have found that they not only enjoy learning Indonesian, but they love coming home and teaching us what they have been taught during that session....eg, colours, counting etc. Great way for the family to get together and learn together.


Not sure on the level of Uni courses offered for teachers, I assume with the number of schools that DO NOT have another language on offer, that there is a lack of qualified teachers to cater for all schools??

Please make this a compulsory for ALL schools, as this will only aid our children in later life. In your question referring to children finding it hard to learn another language, most are phonetic and are easier to grasp than the English language!!

 **2** This survey was obviously constructed with a view to forcing positive responses towards language teaching and is therefore biased. Teaching languages in schools is a wanton waste of valuable educational resources on something that would have very little impact for a student in terms of career or life. It is not possible to offer viable language programs in schools when the choices of language are so overwhelming. Case in point - my family is Danish, if I wanted my children to learn a language it would be Danish but that is not offered at any educational facility - and why would it be with so few who would be interested. My children will learn the language of their heritage, if they choose to, via other avenues - don't waste valuable time at schools, with already crowded curriculum, on a subject that has no demonstrable benefit. (Contact details supplied)

 **3** Whilst I see value in learning another language, I think Australian schools learning Auslan (sign language for hearing impaired) would be a better and more useful approach. Which language is deemed more important to study? My children study Italian in our school and I see this of little value for later life.


Social studies of other cultures does not require language teaching to gain an insight.

 **4** The secondary college in our rural area has a large number of primary feeder schools. The variance in the amount of language taught is great. Some schools with none, some with a variety of languages. When it comes to

compulsory learning of a language in secondary school some students are starting from scratch while others who have had a grounding have to wait until they catch up. A lack of qualified teachers is the biggest problem in primary schools and the attitude at some schools that a second language is not important.

Streaming of students based on their academic ability so that those with a capacity to learn quickly (in all curriculum areas) are put in the same class. Benefits children at both ends of the scale so teachers can teach at a level and pace appropriate to the whole class.

Maybe for our isolated areas, development of on line learning programs.
(Contact details supplied)

 5 My daughter's school provides at best 30 minutes a week of LOTE, as the hour is shared with Art. At times it appears that the whole session is taken up with Art rather than Language learning. In Year 3 her language learning is limited to single word or vocab responses and is unable to communicate even in a simple sentence. I would have expected some simple conversation skills after three years of language learning.

More time in the curriculum mix is needed for LOTE so that teachers are able to concentrate on the skill acquisition side of language learning...learning a language doesn't happen through an 'experience' of Art and culture or by learning lists of words...it happens by practicing a skill...like tennis lessons or piano practice and then putting the skills into practice in a 'real' situation. We don't learn to play tennis by not playing a game....even if it is a contrived game...we still play the game proper.


Principals who make or lead the decisions about how time is used in schools MUST show better educational understanding of how skills (like language, physical motor skills, drawing, performance, and music) are acquired - and then provide the time and the appropriate environment for it to happen.

Principals and other teachers often have no language learning experiences themselves and are happy to 'leave the LOTE to the expert'. The primary 'specialist' in languages isn't a helpful thing really. Many teachers see specialist subjects as 'planning time'...and have little ownership of the learning that is occurring.

I think all primary school teachers should learn as much of the Language as a Year 5 or 6 student might be expected to know. We assume they all know as much science, ICT, reading and writing, history, geography etc as a Year 5 or 6 student would know. Why are language, arts, and PE any different? They

should all know how these skills are acquired and why they are important...and be in a position to support not hinder a language teacher.


Schools like my daughter's are only paying lip-service to LOTE, really...well meaning I know...and not as bad as some schools...but the situation isn't good for Language learning.

 **6** My son's high school has one of the worst structures for language learning I know of - apart from not learning a language at all.

Students do not have the opportunity to learn a language in Year 7 and then are required to undertake one semester of language learning in year 8-10 as a compulsory subject.

The structure of the curriculum requires that students choose 7 units per semester. One of the 8 KLAs has to be dropped each semester...and it is usually LOTE. Students have to 'drop' subjects that are equally as important to their futures to undertake language studies. It is extremely difficult to study language at his school...because the structure does not allow all 8 learning areas to be studied simultaneously.


This school does not support LOTE learning...even though technically it offers a LOTE learning program to its students through to Year 12. I am very disappointed...and am considering withdrawing my son from this school.


 **7** I support the teaching of languages in schools at all levels. I believe it should be taught with a background of culture & religion to enable a fuller understanding. Continuity of teaching a specific language between primary & secondary schools is good but not critical as I see value in teaching multiple languages perhaps to a lesser level than insisting on a single language to full fluency.

I would like to see the languages taught reviewed to include future world trends and a regional influence rather than a historical focus (ie Indian & Chinese taught rather than Latin & French, for example).

I believe that language teaching should be part of a cultural broadening; therefore it may or may not be relevant to higher secondary education and as such should remain optional at yrs 11 & 12 and beyond.


(Contact details supplied)


 **8** We live in a globalised world, and our children are students of that world - it is essential they gain insight into other cultures, languages and approaches in order to develop tolerance and understanding and interest in what goes on around us. Living in the geographical isolation of Australia it is more important than ever.


 **9** I feel that our school is very committed to languages other than English.
Our school offers two languages, German & Japanese.

The only criticism I would have for our school regarding languages is that the Japanese program is taught from Prep through to Year 12, whereas the German program only begins at Year 7. This causes some angst for students and parents, as some children believe that German is easier and drop the Japanese course, and on the other hand some parents force their children to carry on with Japanese because they have already studied in primary school.

It would be great if the children could learn either or both languages all the way through Primary and Secondary school if they felt they could cope with the two languages, unfortunately in the secondary school the classes for both languages are scheduled simultaneously, making it impossible for the students to do both.


 **10** In my opinion, it seems very difficult for students from English only speaking backgrounds to compete with students who come from families or parents in particular where English was not their first language.


 **11** There is insufficient time commitment, especially in primary schools, to the teaching of LOTE in schools. It is not considered to be as important as other areas of the curriculum and achieving proficiency in the language being taught is almost impossible in one hour per week (my children's primary school LOTE program). They enjoy it and have a very competent non-native speaking teacher but their level of proficiency is very low. LOTE has a low priority and is not integrated into the overall curriculum. For most parents, it is unimportant.


 **12** I think our school has a better than average parental support for the learning of languages.


Our principal is supportive, in theory, but as yet this has not translated into providing the facilities or class numbers conducive to a good language program. Language learning has not moved up the priority list.

I think it is a good idea for parents to be involved with the evaluation of the success of a languages program, including post high-school, when it starts to become apparent how the learning has been put into effect, when the young person can make their own choices. eg. career choice, travel choices, learning of further languages, attitude to other nationalities and customs, openness to and evaluation of new ideas, ability to think logically and maintain concentration. Post high-school input from the young people themselves may also be advised.

 **13** Personally I don't think that learning a language is as important as learning other curriculum subjects. I don't think that it should be compulsory for primary schools to teach a language. My four children do not have a particular interest in learning another language at this stage.

 **14** A systematic and comprehensive national language education policy is needed within the context of a national language policy. Similarly at the State/Territory level. Funding should be commensurate with the importance of good language education and vastly increased on the current level. In particular, serious attention is needed to language teacher quality and supply. See "Language Teachers: The Pivot of Policy" produced by the Australian Language and Literacy Council (of NBEET) in the mid-1990s.


 **15** I feel strongly that learning a LOTE (in our case Greek) in the first year of school (ie. aged 5) was highly inappropriate. My children found the transition to school was quite challenging enough without a change of teacher and a change of language! I do advocate learning a LOTE in primary school, but not until grade 3 or 4, once reading, writing and social/emotional skills are firmly in place.


 **16** I feel that it is important to provide a wide variety of Language choices for students. Parents with a heritage other than English, are likely to prefer their child to learn about the culture and language of their ancestry where possible.


This would also provide a greater and more international knowledge base within Australia, than if we started to narrow down the choices available. Although we live closer to Asia, the world is getting smaller every day. So we need to BROADEN the choices, not narrow them!

I have chosen to answer this questionnaire with my 3rd child's school in mind. I have 4 children (oldest at Uni.) BUT they are all at different Sec.

Colleges, with very different approach/success in the LOTE area. I will be happy to elaborate on this if you like more feedback.


 **17** I don't believe LOTE is important, should be voluntary, especially when there is little funding for help with learning English, reading and writing. Many students struggle with English and time spent on LOTE should be for improving their understanding of English. The world is speaking English more than any other language so it should have greater importance.

 **18** I think that "Auslan" would be a much better LOTE across the board. English is classed as the universal language, so chances of dealing with non-English speaking people in jobs/future/everyday life is fairly uncommon these days, whereas there are and will always be deaf people needing to be understood and helped.


 **19** State education authorities (ideally drawing on interstate cooperation) should prepare a clear best practice curriculum in each of the main languages taught to guide teachers. The present curriculum is so vague as to be meaningless, as it has to generalise to all languages. Requiring each individual teacher to totally invent the entire curriculum and teaching materials (as happens in most primary schools) is ridiculous, wasteful, and leads to inferior teaching. It is also the source of many of our transition problems, as high school teachers cannot count on a common core having been taught. Education authorities have very little idea (or interest) in what is actually taught, especially at primary level.
(Contact details supplied)

 **20** My children have had excellent Italian teachers, but the current teacher quit for personal reasons and it is taking time to find a replacement. I think there is a lack of qualified teachers across the languages spectrum.


(My wife is Japanese and I am a Japanese -> English translator.
I did French for 5 years from Y7 (loved it!), then went to Japan for a year. I then did HSC Japanese.)
(Contact details supplied)

 **21** Have had experience as parent of two children studying languages. My older child is now completing his Dip of Ed to become an Indonesian teacher. Due to lack of numbers, he completed year 11 and 12 Indonesian by correspondence and did very well. My younger child is studying year 9 Indonesian, again by correspondence due to lack of numbers choosing to

continue a language study beyond the "compulsory" years. She is doing well and enjoying the independence after suffering two years study with a teacher that had some personality problems. This contributed to the lack of numbers of students wanting to continue the course.

 **22** I think many of your questions were a direct attempt to strengthen your case. For example Q58, of course languages "broadens students' minds to the wider civilization of the world" but this can also be achieved without knowing the language. Q30 "Learning a Language improves a child's future employment prospects" again ANY and all learning will improve my child's prospects but depending on what that child does language may very important or of no use at all. Q40 "I believe that studying a Language other than English will benefit my child later in life". I agree that language MAY benefit my child later in life but I disagree that it WILL benefit that child.

I believe that children in primary school should receive exposure and an appreciation of languages and not necessarily learn a particular language, they could then make a informed decision later in their education as to what language, if any they wished to take up.

 **23** * The study of a LOTE is important at all levels of schooling.

* New and innovative ways of teaching LOTE should be explored, resourced and implemented in schools.

* Government curriculum in terms of LOTE is not well communicated, in particular new strategies and programs as mentioned in this questionnaire.

* Too few of the schools offer immersion programs, i.e. subjects other than the LOTE taught in the language

* The LOTE offered in government primary schools is rather arbitrary, i.e. each school appears to be choosing the language that they want to offer. There is little coordination of languages offered in primary and high school in the same regions. This leads to discontinuation and disruption for students who are often forced to drop the language they picked up in primary school and pick up a new one in high school.

* Afternoon and weekend language schools are under-resourced, some regions have few or no schools on offer, or the choice of languages on offer is limited.


✍ 24 Unfortunately for my three children, their Italian teacher went on maternity leave and was never replaced which I personally think is a detriment to the school.


✍ 25 Previously my daughter studied French in a Gov school. Resources and commitment were not as good as in current Non-Gov school that my sons attend. French has a much higher profile and acceptance in the Non-Gov school.


✍ 26 I am an Indonesian who has lived many years in Australia. My children are going to the only bilingual (Indonesian) primary school in Victoria (as far as I know). The program has been developed for about eight years. The coordinator has worked so hard to introduce, improve and keep it going. It has become a prominent program in the community. I always think that learning another language will not only broaden your mind, respect other people with different cultures but also give you some experience. My children's analytical and thinking skills have been greatly improved by learning a language at school. But the local secondary school (Benalla College) seems to me doesn't demonstrate the same enthusiastic approach as Benalla East primary school. Benalla East PS is one of the feeder schools. The students who come from the bilingual school have learned at least 5 years of Indonesian at primary (The bilingual program offers 7.5 hours per week of language learning). I am sure the local college is aware of that fact but I don't think they have tried to accommodate the language curriculum to cater those primary students who have been through the bilingual program. I think the college should make a link, work together and acknowledge the bilingual primary school. Here we are, trying to promote learning a language from primary and they (the college) don't try. It's such a unique program and the college should look for a LOTE teacher who can manage and cater those primary children who have learned for five years. The college should look for some assistance from the department and fund perhaps so that they can employ a LOTE teacher who can continue giving more experience to the primary students who have learned in a bilingual setting.


✍ 27 I feel the LOTE in government primary schools is a token gesture and at our school it is half an hour a fortnight which is nothing. There is no text or homework and I don't believe the teachers are that qualified. I have experienced another language taught in a private school and this is taken far more seriously and with very good results. I have also seen languages such as Latin taken up in year 9 in the private school with great results and what a great language to help with English. I believe if the gov't primary schools are not going to take language seriously they should simply teach culture i.e study the traditions geography and food of a variety of other countries and a

few key words. Don't pretend to teach something they are not.

 **28** I myself am a migrant although an English speaking one. I had the opportunity at my school in Boston Massachusetts to choose from many languages and took three as well as Latin. Myself and my family enjoy learning about other cultures and their language and I myself intend to take some further study next year in German and French. We all believe it broadens your life and helps understand other cultures. I don't know much about the government side of things, but do know that Billanook is a much more satisfactory place to learn. My daughter attended a state high school for a while and found her teachers enthusiastic but the other students less so. I feel Australians in general need to be educated to change their perception of the value of studying a foreign language.

 **29** For the first year that my daughter was at school the librarian, who had retrained as a LOTE teacher, taught Italian. We had just come back from 16 months in Italy and were disappointed that there wasn't a 'real' Italian teacher. Other parents were unhappy with the situation, although appreciative of the librarian's efforts. We and other parents made our feelings known to the principal and consequently for the past two years we have had an Italian speaking Italian teacher, as well as an assistant. I suspect that if the parents had not made an effort to show their concern, the principal would not have considered LOTE a high priority. Both my husband and I speak a second language so we think learning a LOTE is important. However, it would be nice if more time was spent on it in schools. Even twice a week, rather than once. It just isn't enough time.

 **30** As our schools continue to struggle to provide the basic subjects to our children in an effective manner, I believe time invested on languages could be better utilised. The fact that my children will have spent seven years learning Chinese (and might I add not very fluently), then will go on to a secondary school that teachers German leaves me wondering where the value is in my children's future having learnt another language at all! Let's get the basics right first or rather teach them about the varied cultures of the world and leave the languages to later if they so choose.


 **31** My family and I have recently returned to Australia after living in Italy for 3.5 years. I have noticed that many people think that it is wonderful that our children speak another language but do not transfer that importance to their education system expectations.

Unfortunately, I am still uncertain about many aspects of our new schools attitude to languages and issues such as quality of teacher training, etc. therefore have a high response of "I dont knows.


I was unsure of whether children that struggle with English refers to children with learning problems and/or those of NESB. I believe it makes a difference.


Involving students with members of the broader community may help to give a different culture a place and face. This can be difficult in rural areas.

Happy to follow-up.
(Contact details supplied)


 **32** In Italy children are taught another language from 1st class, and a third in high school. In Australia our child was banned from speaking another language in class because the teacher didn't understand (or wasn't interested) in another language. How can language be taught when the teachers have no language skills.

Too many myopic teachers who are under qualified and over confident of their own brilliance.

 **33** I just think that if our children learn a little bit about other cultures in our world (through language studies) perhaps their generation will be more understanding/accepting of other people from different nations and hence, create a more harmonious world.

 **34** We need to explore the idea of being a bilingual country. Languages are dying everyday and this is not good.


Language is about communication and building relationships this is incredibly important when need a real commitment to teaching our children a second language. It is good for the brain and good for the world.

 **35** The curriculum frameworks need to be tighter and more demanding in the junior levels. A detailed 'best practice' curriculum needs to be provided for teachers to work from. Students need to have access to books and texts to take home and in some cases keep (Mine have brought nothing home in seven years. Resources should include recorded materials and the ability for any child to access on the internet.

The govt should provide a full curriculum for any language on the internet/text and CD-rom which is can be accessed easily by children, so they can pursue a language of their choice as well as the one formally taught in the school.

The focus should be on learning the language, the culture should be secondary or the theme for teaching various concepts. There is much confusion about this in schools, many teachers think the main point is to teach children about the culture.

Teachers should go to European countries and observe how they teach, ie use much more aural, oral, songs, memory work and grammar.

 **36** My experience of my children's LOTE program in Primary school (Italian) was that it was very disappointing. Ever-present and of little use as all three failed to pick up more than a dozen isolated words over 7 years of learning! Could not conduct the most rudimentary conversation in Italian. Immersion programs seem to work better, but are not for everyone. They are also of little use as the student may have to learn a different language in secondary or be lumped in with beginners for the next 3 or 4 years. Secondary experience was much better, but still fairly inadequate. Change to German or French was refreshing, but many students in the class VERY disinterested/bored/not supported by families. LOTS of parents can't see the point!

How is it that students in Germany are reading Dickens in English by Yr 9 and ours can barely form a sentence???

The LOTES are not badly taught, but there is inadequate time given, inadequate support for the importance of the learning. LOTES remain among the few subjects requiring any intellectual discipline - structure, the unfashionable rote learning and lots of practice. This does not endear them to many students - perhaps they are too different from their other subjects which they can often coast through.

Schools are reducing the languages offered - ours dropped German on the pretext of increasing numbers in the other two offered-French and Indonesian, but this has had little effect. They soon introduced Chinese as a first Language for the overseas students without actually consulting school council.

The classes in VCE are usually too small to run. Private schools can fund small classes and tend to have better support for LOTES from parents and students as they KNOW they will be able to continue to Yr 12. In our school, there seems to be a mass exodus in VCE as students follow the crowd to ensure they get the subjects they choose - otherwise they might take a LOTE in Yr 11 and not have the choice to continue in Yr 12.

Ideas for promoting LOTES:

- offer them in VCE like VET subjects between a small cluster of local schools, with a double period one afternoon and one morning as part of the normal timetable block.

- start LOTE learning LATER as part of elective programs in Yr nine and TEACH THEM LIKE BEGINNER PROGRAMS AT UNI - very intense and rapid so that students gain skills and sense of achievement QUICKLY.

- re-introduce some intellectual challenge in other subjects so that is the learning culture.

- ensure primary language teachers know how to teach conversational language so that students actually use real language and also develop a sense of achievement.

- ensure each school offers some European languages as these are actually helpful for students' English.


- don't EXPECT everyone to continue a LOTE, but give them an enjoyment of their limited experience and plenty of encouragement and stability for those who do continue!


Thanks for the opportunity and GOOD LUCK!!!


 **37** I believe that learning another language is a very important part of education.

The funding for the languages in schools has been slashed. And the primary schools find it easier to incorporate in into integrated studies, the reality being that not real language teaching is done.

Increase the funding, increase the status, and make the standards reflect the time allocated for the teaching.


 **38** Learning a language has stimulated my child and has resulted in him spending 2 summer school breaks as an exchange student. However I teach at an outer suburb government school and the effort put in to try to engage the students and the parents still does not obtain the interest or need to study a language by most families. As many have their own language, with English being their second language, the parents would rather see more time spent in teaching and developing the correct use of English (especially as many parents are struggling themselves). The students see little use in these language subjects and usually opt out as soon as possible. The small percentage that stay on enjoy the subject.


 **39** The ability to communicate with a person who speaks another language is wonderful; it helps to break down any barriers-(real or perceived) between people from different cultures.


 **40** Special needs children should not be excluded from learning language- more time and money should be spent lifting their English skills. To discriminate against them because the primary system has let them down in not getting a better result is unfair. English must be the most important as it is required for everything we do in Australia. Migrants can assist in these programs and should be given the opportunity to do so. Many Australians don't get the opportunity to travel overseas
So unless they use their second language in this country it will probably be wasted.

Also how about introducing some old fashioned Australian. (bonza mate!!) Call it Australian history but there was a definite language spoken by our forefathers and this has been lost over the years. With all these other nationalities merging with ours I think we are losing our own style, this should be a exchange, we should do more to protect who we are. People arriving here to live can and do bring the love of their history to share with us- we need to teach everyone what history our country has and that we are not just a mob of English living on an island. Aboriginal culture should be understood and this cannot be the case when modern schooling does not teach this to society.

You need to love language to do well at it - it cannot be forced on anyone - it doesn't seem worthwhile without a use.

 **41** I think languages are undervalued and very important to a child's education

 **42** I believe that all primary schools should incorporate a language into their curriculum that is used across the other subjects so that the language is really being used across the curriculum which would strengthen the students grasp on the language. I know it is difficult to follow on with the same language when a child proceeds on to secondary school, but I feel that most primary and secondary schools are working together to choose the same or similar languages so that there is a transition. If not, I believe that the learning of any language will help with the learning of another language if the basic principles are taught. Again I feel that the language needs to be used across the other subjects, but unless the teaching staff have the skills to teach another language, this could prove difficult. Still, if the process was begun, I believe in time, here in Australia we could be more multilingual, as other countries are.

 **43** I feel that it is important for all children to be given the opportunity to learn a language. However, if a child is struggling with basic subjects eg. Maths & English I feel that the child should be given the opportunity to have more time to grasp these rather than learning a foreign language.

✍ 44 Unfortunately, my daughter who is studying Indonesian in year 7, says the teacher spends as much time having to discipline unruly students as teaching. Rachel has therefore lost some of her initial enthusiasm for the subject.

✍ 45 I believe that there is strong benefit in children learning at least one LOTE in primary school. This should be continued on to the early years of high school so that more complex language concepts and more involved cultural aspects can be explored and their minds broadened up to that point.

Given the intensity of study already experienced in the senior years of high school I would be most concerned if LOTE become compulsory in those years.

✍ 46 Due to lack of funding the year 11 language students were forced to complete year 12 via distance education. The same number of students were going on to complete year 12 from the year 11 class. The students were unaware of this change until the last few weeks of last year. So they took on this subject at the commencement of year 11 understanding and believing it would continue in the same manner.

This will impact their scores and demonstrates how languages are viewed by the education department as a secondary and perhaps unimportant subject. A shame!


✍ 47 I think we may need to pay Language teachers more in order to attract them to the profession. We have a paucity of Asian language teachers in my area and my children of Chinese background on their father's side have the option of French or Italian at secondary school - they only had Greek at primary school.


My son in Year 8 has not enjoyed learning French because of the 'tight' teacher, though he has agreed to continue with it. I do think children of this generation provide some challenges to teachers that we have to retrain them to meet.

An attitudinal change is also required at a societal level about the value of language acquisition.

I think children should have to learn a language throughout school and not have the option of dropping it at Year 9.

(Contact details supplied)


 48 My child is only in Grade One. I have not addressed the question of languages in Australian schools very deeply, because her school has a strong language policy already for Junior School, and Secondary school is barely on the radar yet. Most of what I believe is hearsay - I'm not aware of much public discussion about language teaching. I will now keep my eyes open for articles in the paper. Does the issue receive media attention?

 49 Principals need to be actively committed to the language program, not just say they are. Money comes into Victorian schools as part of LOTE funding, but does not necessarily get spent where it is designed to be spent as it is up to the principal to decide where the funds go. LOTE Teachers fight hard for the programs, but are often the lone voice and so aren't heard.


Timetabling and staffing has huge impact on the quality of LOTE programs, as does the rooms where students do their language studies.

Languages could be strengthened at schools by their Education departments "forcing, encouraging, enticing" the principals and the community of the value of languages learning by everyone. Unless schools are told (not just by language teachers) that they must support languages well then they will not.

Confession: I tried to answer the questionnaire as a parent, which I am, however when it came to this section the fact that I'm a language teacher has overtaken my parent point of view - it's hard to separate the two.
(Contact details supplied)

 50 As the mother of a gifted child I think learning a foreign language is a fabulous form of enrichment. I believe his foreign language and his instrumental music are the two subjects that demand application and focus and teach him to work hard in a way he doesn't learn from other areas of the curriculum.

My child has been fortunate to receive enrichment classes with native speakers. More such opportunities, for example through interschool exchange programs, events and competitions would be great.


 51 I do not believe that languages are taught with a view to the children learning vocab & actually using the language. My parental experience is for 2 children in the primary sector to have to learn Italian in inner city Melbourne. They have eaten pizza, played soccer, eaten pasta & gelato, even taken Italian


food products from our pantry to school but they cannot talk to the local shopkeepers etc.


I think the focus on language learning should be to actively speak the vocabulary and learn the grammar. The children may then improve their learning of English grammar .

On hearsay, children in primary schools in Greece do learn English in a way that they can talk to English speaking visitors, something I would like to see in our population.

(Contact details supplied)

 **52** Caulfield Junior College offers a unique elective program in Victoria. In this elective section ("called the French school of Melbourne"), students study French on a week about manner. At the end of the primary school years they are perfectly bilingual, able to either return in the French national educational system or continue within the Australian educational system. please consult; (Contact details supplied)

 **53** Too little time is allocated for the language program. The school rely heavily on out of school language immersion programs for students who chose to attend.


 **54** At CJC, we are fortunate to host the International French School which teaches French speaking children the French curriculum for half the year. As a consequence, the LOTE offered at CJC is French and the children gain tremendously from interacting with French speaking students and fully qualified French staff.


In addition, CJC offers a 'French Immersion' course for those students and parents interested in learning more than is offered in the standard curriculum for LOTE. This runs three hours a week outside school and is a wonderful opportunity for students to increase their awareness of the language and culture. Both my sons attend this course and have benefited from an increased knowledge as well as increased confidence in their oral skills.


Any study should include a visit to CJC to see what is offered and how this multi-cultural mix works for students and staff alike, and any school that takes LOTE seriously should offer extra facilities for students' learning.

I believe LOTE is a vital part of our children's education and should be compulsory for all students to year 10 and any move to remove it from the

curriculum would be a huge mistake. Australia is isolated enough physically; it does not need to be isolated further.


 55 I am very satisfied with the French immersion program at CJC (Caulfield Junior Caulfield) but I do realise it is an exception in schools. I do agree that the quality of Australian language teachers is often poor. Maybe one can look at their minimum training because how can one expect a child to speak properly if it is not taught properly. CJC's immersion program however has thumbs up!


 56 Caulfield Junior College is a bilingual public school where the 2 main world's languages are taught (English and French). It needs to be officially recognised as a bilingual school and supported by the State or Government. It works well thanks to a strong parents group willing to develop this program. Unfortunately places are very limited due to the school's great success and numerous families cannot access this program. It shows that there is an increasing interest in languages.


 57 I think that Australian children do not appreciate the importance of learning a language other than English. I think it is a cultural matter - Australians expect others to speak English and as so much of children's 'culture' is in English, the children cannot see the importance of learning another language.


I cannot think of a solution other than to try to emphasise at home the importance of learning other languages.
(Contact details supplied)


Victorian Students said

 **1** I think that (name of school) should try to have more LOTE subjects, because not many people like Japanese or Indonesian and half our year level all enjoy Italian other than all these other classes.

 **2** I think that there should be more languages for us to choose from and we should have a choice in what language we want to learn

 **3** I think that LOTE is lost on a lot of people that don't want to do it and in turn they screw around in class and make it harder for the ones who want to do LOTE learn. It should definitely be optional as 95% of students from Year 7 to Year 9 don't want to do it and they should be able to choose other classes like a extra Maths or English. Get better TEACHERS!!!!!!!!!!!!!!


 **4** Currently in my year level, there are only 7 students in my language class. This is quite disappointing as there are 1000's of students in my school. To improve this, the school should get more involved and support the students who are studying these subjects. Despite teachers being involved with their jobs and very supportive towards the students, it is unbelievable that the school doesn't encourage students to study languages. Students that complete a language in our school are the ones who achieve their enter scores into university, yet the school doesn't realise this and should be more involved with their students' studies. Learning a language is not only beneficial to the students enter scores but it can help in future years.


 **5** In my year level, year 11, there are only 7 students committed to Indonesian, two of which are in year 10 which I believe is encouraging because it shows that some people do like learning another language. This figure is alarming because it shows how little the school emphasises the need to branch out and learn another language. Learning another language can be beneficial because it can help you to secure a job once you are out of school/university.


Personally, I think my school is very poor in supporting the need for learning another language. It is unbearable for me to think that only 7 students out of 300+ in my year and 1000 in the whole school. It shows that the school administration (not the teachers) do little to advertise the benefits of learning languages. I also think it is unbelievable that all the teachers I have had for


learning Indonesian put in so much effort, but receive little encouragement from the school itself and many students.

Overall I think learning languages should be encouraged more in schools, its a travesty that learning Indonesian is a dying subject.

 6 I think that the Indonesian teachers at our school are not respected for what they do. I feel that the Indonesian teachers at our school do lots of work probably even more work than what other teachers do. They have to spend more time preparing and researching than the other teachers. Our teacher wanted to take our class on a trip to Malaysia so that we can see for ourselves how many different agricultural changes there are from Australia yet the school council declined her offer because there are travel warnings to Indonesia.

 7 Overall, I believe that this school has done a good job at teaching language classes other than English for e.g. Indonesian. Indonesian is one of my favourite subjects at school and is good that everyone has the opportunity to learn other languages at school and some people do enjoy learning different languages and they would like to continue doing it in VCE because they are good at it or they enjoy it.


 8 I believe that learning a language at school is important for younger generations. It helps them to be confident within themselves and able to speak to people of another nationality. Keeping languages in school would benefit the younger generations and help them in the future.


 9 I am in year 10 and currently learning year 11 Indonesian at my school. I think learning another language in school, is extremely beneficial for any student and can help them learn about the other cultures and languages around the world.


How ever it is very upsetting to see that there are only 7 students out of a few hundred students in year 11 at my school who chose to commit themselves to learning another language in school. Two of these students being year 10's, including me. I feel that my school and the other schools around Australia should encourage more students to learn another language. I believe that schools are not showing their students all the benefits of learning a language. I do support that LOTE is a compulsory subject in years 7-9, how ever I think the subject is still not taken seriously enough. Students are currently not aware of how fun and interesting the subjects can actually be.


We should further encourage learning LOTE and introduce more languages in schools to give students more options for languages they wish to learn. It may not be that students don't want to learn LOTE, but that the language which they wish to learn isn't available at their school.


 **10** Learning a language is beneficial for younger generations to be able to communicate with people from other nationalities.


 **11** In my opinion languages being taught in government schools is really not worth it. At the very least it should be an elective and not a compulsory class that most students can't grasp. Every lesson, students misbehave, I missed out on this class because I was in Debate. The cultural excursion was a waste of time. To strengthen this, the classes should be made OPTIONAL and the basics reinforced a lot more. People need to be taught the basics and have the class taught more regularly or not at all.

 **12** I think that schools should have a variety of languages available to learn other than what my school has, which is Indonesian and Italian. There should be a larger variety, such as French, Japanese, Italian, German, Chinese and Indonesian, just for examples.

 **13** Learning other languages should be 100% up to the student.


 **14** I personally don't like the subject and find it hard to grasp it; it would be a lot better if the students got the chance to choose whether or not to do the subject. And then they should also have a bigger range of language subjects, therefore if you're not interested in the one, you have another choice instead of being forced to do something you don't want to.


 **15** I believe that Languages in schools can be strengthened by actually being able to experience the culture and not just study it. Sure, studying it is very interesting and challenging but I would interest us more if we were able to experience it. We should be able to have more incursions, excursions etc. because doing theory all year is pretty boring and you seem to lose interest before it's even half way through the semester. Our teachers try extremely hard to make L.O.T.E more interesting but the extra curriculum will keep us interested through out the year.


 16 The language program at our school has started improving lately due to in-school tasks we have been completing, such as fruit tasting and cooking your own ethnic dish, but to gain the interest of more high school students, we should try having some interesting excursions (not just to a museum or something), relevant to whatever we are studying at the time, that will get kids more excited about taking part in a language class.

 17 The only way to get people more interested is for the teachers to do more activities that require participation.

 18 The languages in school should be the same in all schools in Australia or Victoria.

 19 I think that Languages could be strengthened at school by giving a wider range of Languages because not everyone will be interested in Indonesian or in Italian!!!!


 20 I would like to say that everything about our language classes are fine because we have a wonderful teacher to teach us!

 21 I don't like learning Japanese because it's a waste of time for me and it's boring I think we should learn a different language


 22 I think that learning another language has helped me learn more about different cultures.

 23 It's not fun

 24 It's crap!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

 25 Get rid of (name of teacher)!!!!

 26 No languages

 27 I like (teacher) but my friends from 7P say miss (teacher) is scary :-O

✍ 28 I would prefer to learn Italian.

✍ 29 I really enjoy learning languages

✍ 30 I think the Indonesian side of things is good but more teachers need to be employed I like miss (teacher) and she is good and friendly but miss (teacher) is scary

✍ 31 I think that learning a language is a great escape from maths and English you know all those academic stuff

✍ 32 Languages suck

✍ 33 Indonesian is better than French


✍ 34 Get cool teacher that know how to teach right like (teacher named) she is cool and she knows what she is on about


✍ 35 I just don't want to learn it.

✍ 36 I really enjoy learning a language other then English but I feel that we don't have enough time on our timetables to learn them properly.

I have studied Indonesian in primary and also I have had to learn French and Indonesian in year 7. I would have rathered do Indonesian than French because I don't want to worry about doing another language that I am not doing next year. (Teacher) is a very good Indonesian teacher and I have enjoyed having to work in her classes. Many of my friends from other classes don't like their Indonesian teacher.


✍ 37 I think in all schools it should be up to the students and their parents to make the choice whether they should do a language. Because it not anyone else right to make up your mind for you and people shouldn't be pressured in to doing something that they don't want to do.


 **38** I think it's a good thing that we are taught another language at school. But I think the way we are being taught isn't very good.


 **39** I loved learning German at school and wanted to continue studying in my VCE. But when I went to my careers counselling session with the Careers Adviser, he said that I should try to do another subject that I would do well in and that language was pretty hard. I am not sure how he knows how well I would have gone in German. He also said that if I pick German the class will probably not run as it is cancelled each year because not enough people pick it. He said I was better off to try to get into a subject that would run. My parents did not understand why I didn't choose German in VCE. They were told there were too few picking it to run the class. Mum and Dad were very mad at the school for not running the class but what can we do? A few of my friends were told the same thing. My teacher was really sad when she heard we had not picked German and very mad when we said we were told it would be a waste of time.

My German teacher was fantastic. She took us on excursions and we were always entering competitions like the Poetry Competition and the School Film Festival. That was fun. There were always posters on the wall and what she called 'Redemittel' to help us say things. Sometimes when we were lucky enough to get time in the computer lab - and the Internet was working - we also visited some very cool sites. My teacher said she wished she had a computer in the classroom as it was such a pain to book the lab and the data projector was always booked out in the library. But we were always doing role plays and we saw some cool videos and DVDs. I really felt like I was getting somewhere at the end of Year 10. Some of the other kids did not like German but they did not like a lot of subjects.


I hope I can go on learning German one day but I am still a bit mad that I couldn't do it in my VCE.

 **40** I CAN'T answer most of the questions, namely because we don't HAVE a language class at our school!! (We USED to have Indonesian classes, though.) We only have about 30 kids at our school and it's hard to attract skilled language teachers to this remote area.

 **41** I think that every school should be teaching LOTE (Languages Other Than English) because it might help you in the future. I think every school should have a variety of languages not just one.


 42 I don't really enjoy LOTE but have learnt to appreciate more now that I realise how much it could help me in my years ahead.


I love some of the activities that we do in LOTE and I enjoy attempting to pronounce some of the words, me and my friends always get a laugh out of that.


 43 Hi I'm (student name),
I go to Southern Cross Primary School and I am one of the top in my languages class. In our school we use the computers a lot in fact all the time in our languages study. We go onto an eduweb website called languages online, which is where we do our Languages Studies. Even though our schools language is Indonesian we also get an opportunity to do other languages such as French, German and Italian.


Another program we have at our school is Task Magic which has fun games that teach us how to speak certain parts of the language such as greetings, animals, body parts, school items, clothing, colours and numbers. I enjoy playing these games as they are games that we kids play in English to. Such as hangman, soccer, pool and a wide range of other entertaining games.

I appreciate the facilities our school has to offer but that could improve.

 44 I think that, language subjects should be offered as a subject in year 7 through the whole year not half year of one language and the other half of the year another language

 45 Although Language is difficult at times it is worth it. Ps. I would really like that that money cause they will give me yum cha peace out choopa rocks!

 46 We should go on LOTE excursions more. We went to an Indonesian restaurant and I learnt more about the culture than I did in class

 47 This school is terrible and the teachers are unfair and treat me like shit. Help is need especially for the Principal he is a dodgy and a person who would not help to save a drowning child if it meant his discomfort!

 48 I don't like LOTE it is boring

✍ 49 LOTE is boring and I DONT like it!!!!!!
It is very boring.....

✍ 50 If we are to learn a language other than English, let it be a USEFUL language, something that is spoken by most people around the world, such as Chinese or Japanese.

✍ 51 I think that maybe we should be able to experience learning languages in other ways not just sitting in the classroom and being taught or on the computer and being taught.

Frequent excursions and a trip to the country we are being taught is a good idea.

We are offered this at Kingswood but only for four week if you are learning Chinese.

if you learn French then you are given the option to go to Noumea for a week and a half.


I think that the Chinese students should be offered something like this.

✍ 52 I think that the languages in our school aren't very diverse. There aren't many choices in what you would like to learn but we are a small school. The teachers aren't very strict and sometimes let us get away with things but they do try.


✍ 53 I believe that everyone in the world should have to speak the same language: ENGLISH! Although this would wipe out much multi-culturalism, it would help global commerce and peace. I study Chinese in school, and I loathe it. I did study Japanese in primary, but I enjoyed that, I was Japanese captain at my school. I think that the Chinese language is despicable and should be banned. I find that the European languages are far more sensible than the Asian ones, like most European things. I know this is racist, but it is my opinion.


✍ 54 The teachers for our language classes are not as well trained as the other teachers in our school (such as math and English teachers) the language teachers (especially the Chinese ones) let the class get away with a lot more than the other teachers (like math and English teachers) so we don't end up doing much work and there is one Chinese class in my year level that doesn't do any work at all and just play games or wag the class entirely. Our teacher also seems to think were all stupid, she goes through every stroke of the character(s)we learn very slowly! and we get in trouble for the littlest things

that we would not get in trouble for in other classes. and then when we run out of time at the end of the class because she does every thing so slowly we are kept in through our break and other classes because she has to rush us through every thing and we don't end up learning any thing. Our Chinese teacher is not very good at English so it is hard to understand her and harder to learn the translation for the word(s) we are learning.

 55 I loved this survey. It is the best and funnest survey I have was ever done!!!!

Victorian Language Teachers said

 **1** I think its important that assuming suitably qualified teaching staff is available, schools should back up a national priority on LOTE by agreeing to run senior LOTE classes, even if numbers are low, and explicitly stating to the school community that LOTE is a key educational priority, and the educational rationale behind this.


 **2** Languages in schools are only valued as much as the school community deems it to be important. This depends on the school focus and priorities. Often languages are provided as an "add on" but not as a focal part of the curriculum. This is highlighted in the lack of resourcing, PD provided to the LOTE teacher, and time allocated to the teaching of a language at each school.

Even with the implementation of VELs, outlined in the Government Blue print, little has changed. The government stipulates that LOTE be taught 3 hours a week in schools and assessment is based with this time frame in mind. In reality most schools if lucky are given 40 mins a week or (less). It is impossible to have an effective and realistic assessment outcome based on these facts.

Often LOTE teachers feel that they are an ATP tool, substituting the main frame teachers and working around to fill in when needed. Furthermore, most LOTE teachers are isolated often planning on their own, with very little feedback / time / to exchange with other teachers in order to develop an effective and stimulating program.

Lastly they are provided with minimal opportunities to further develop themselves, or to be given the opportunity to source new materials/strategies/ ideas/ etc.

Much more needs to be accomplished if languages are to be taken seriously in school. Students need to be provided with effective learning environments and opportunities equal to students who learn multiple languages in other cultures and countries. This includes educating the whole school community to the importance of language learning in schools at a prep level (or earlier)!

 **3** My biggest frustration as a LOTE teacher revolves around two issues:

1. General Australian perceptions that languages are irrelevant.
2. Insufficient time to teach language. CSF and now VELs standards are based on 3hrs of contact time...I get 45mins per week with some classes and 1hr with some.
3. Lack of quality teachers. My students go to the feeder secondary college and their prior learning is not acknowledged. There seems to be a problem with differentiated teaching.

✍ 4 I believe that languages in schools can be strengthened by adjusting the timetable to provide more consistency for the students. E.G more than 3 lessons per week especially at senior levels and ensuring daily contact time.

✍ 5 Currently my school supports smaller classes, however in the future I am not sure.

The LOTE budget at the school is minimal and pathetic-\$240 each for Japanese and French, \$400 for Indonesian.

My school is a senior college and we have to work in with the Middle years college, who drastically reduced the LOTE program last year but has plans to improve it next year '07.

Parents don't support LOTE because their children only learn bits and pieces of a language throughout their schooling and end up with nothing. Unless the LOTE program is strong, well supported, resourced and continuous, students don't get much out of it. Those who persevere with LOTE are often rewarded with high ENTER scores, self satisfaction and enjoy the smaller classes.

To strengthen LOTE: Funding for smaller classes, promote the benefits of learning a language (posters, TV Advertising), guest speakers visiting schools during subject selection week, compulsory LOTE classes till Year 8, encourage teachers to train in LOTE, provide teaching equipment/ resources, benefits for schools in running LOTE classes- basically money!!!

✍ 6 I believe languages must be compulsory for Year 7 students and all courses offered at high schools should be for the FULL year. There needs to be more Professional Development seminars in the target languages so that language teachers can maintain their skills.

Language Teachers try very hard to keep their classes running.


✍ 7 Until a LOTE is a compulsory requirement for entrance into University LOTE will suffer at school level.


There is also a need to have dedicated LOTE rooms in the building allocation in all schools so teachers don't have to travel around the school going from room to room.


There needs to be more opportunities for teachers of LOTE to have ongoing training and in-country language experiences to continually enhance their language development.


Travel bans need to be lifted for Indonesia so Indonesian language teachers can take school groups and also go themselves to improve their language by

immersion. The current Commonwealth Government is xenophobic and racist.

 **8** Having started teaching German in Victoria at the beginning of this year and coming to Australia as a German native speaker from Germany, I still have to adapt a lot to the different motivation level students in language classes generally show as well as to the lower level of achievements students generally make in class.

 **9** Asian language Programs are very important for Australia's future trade within the Asian Region. However in many cases it is difficult to get this message across to the community let alone to my colleagues in teaching. With an already overcrowded curriculum many other disciplines consistently try to downgrade the importance of LOTE and would gladly see it disposed of so they can take the allocated time. LOTE at my school is only a semester taster at year 7 of the two languages on offer. Then in year 8 students undertake one language for a year. Year 9 & 10 it is placed in the elective block and fails to attract large numbers as it means that students must give up two semesters to continue their study. Many elect for the easier subjects. The fact that students of Indonesian language can not participate in country visits to Indonesia also affects numbers. In my opinion LOTE should be compulsory in from Prep to 10 and schools should not be allowed to opt out and offer it as an elective, then using the excuse "well we do offer it but it does not attract sufficient numbers."

 **10** I believe that the community as a whole, particularly in areas which are mainly White Anglo Saxon, that there is a real struggle to teach students why language are important to learn. This is because the parents don't see it as relevant. There are several ways to deal with this problem but it needs the full support of the school which is often not available. The same argument continues as to why LOTE should be number 1 in subject priority as with any the others should be there too.

 **11** The major issues are:
*lack of sustained interest and involvement from colleagues.
*students have LOTE for only one semester of the year.
*no community support for hosting an ALT.

However having said that, I am very enthusiastic about LOTE and the students really enjoy their language and culture studies. Their "engagement" is my priority. Parents acknowledge the program and comment on their children's enthusiasm.

✍ 12 Students and families in small rural communities such as mine where multiculturalism is not a reality see very little reason for studying another language and it is often hard work to convince them that studies of LOTE are relevant or important to them.

✍ 13 I would like to have the opportunity to take part in an online qualification course like the Opal Japanese course that was offered free of charge to teachers of LOTE through La Trobe Uni in 2000. It no longer exists.

✍ 14 I would like to see language which are one of the eight key learning areas be treated as such and made compulsory until at least year 9. That all teachers and principals are made aware of the importance of learning languages as they are important in other countries. The reason that people learn English and other languages in other countries is that they see the importance of other languages to their own learning and future. We as Australians seem to think that everyone else should learn our language if they want to communicate with us. It's the old catch cry 'why do we have to learn a language, I am never going to use it, I am never going to travel.' and often this is a reflection of the home environment as well as the general community.

✍ 15 As a committee member of the Japanese Language Teachers Association of Victoria and the Learning Area Leader for LOTE within my school, I have contact with a large number of teachers both within my school and from other schools / systems. I am constantly reminded of the poor state of language education in many schools. My school is extremely supportive and we have a growing, vibrant, well staffed language program. But as the type of questions in this survey indicate, many schools place a low profile on the study of languages and many principals use ignorance of language teaching methodology and their own state's financing models as an excuse to continually whittle down the effectiveness and viability of LOTE programs within their schools.

Asked quite openly, many principals place a low priority on even attempting to staff LOTE programs, using a skills shortage as an excuse rather than developing some strategies to build and maintain a solid LOTE program. Why is it that my school can maintain a solid program whereas others cannot??? The removal of NALSAS funding spelt the end for many programs, however principals conveniently deny knowledge of the fact that these funds were then incorporated into global budgets. THE MONEY IS THERE! Schools are no longer required under VELs to report on Levels 1 - 3 of the LOTE guidelines so guess what is happening? Schools are removing LOTE teachers

and replacing this with 'language awareness' a subject in name only with no guidelines, no curriculum, and no recognised qualification. Also it has NO OUTCOME.


Federal Government initiatives must pay more than lip-service to LOTE, State departments must audit schools that don't provide adequate timetabling to LOTE and school principals must not play favourites with high profile subjects. If 10 percent of the money, time and energy went into LOTE as was thrown at Literacy and Numeracy, every student leaving school would have a solid background in another language. I might add that for all the money spent on those two areas, teachers still achieve little more than marginal rates of improvement. It is not by co-incidence that the International Baccalaureate requires another language, U.S. and European schools are clamoring to re-establish Language programs and all Asian students are compulsorily taught a foreign language. Every educational study on second language acquisition has noted a flow on effect of improvement in other learning domains.

Our students must compete in a global marketplace. Denying them access to a foreign language while at school places them at a disadvantage that the rest of the world is quickly realising is a valuable commodity. In the year 2000, English was overtaken as the main language of the internet. It has now fallen to less than 25% and soon will fall even further. What this means in simple terms is that 75% of the information trafficked over electronic means is in a LANGUAGE OTHER THAN ENGLISH!

Australia needs language teachers to equip a generation of doctors, engineers and other trades and professions with the requisite skills to operate on a world stage.

I am happy to speak or follow up on any of these points, but now I have a class of bright eyed language learners to teach, one of 34 language classes that operate at my school, taught by 6 dynamic, dedicated staff.


(Contact details supplied)

 **16** In my experience, teaching in LOTE is painful and difficult due to the mindset of the demographic which makes up the clientele at this school. This mindset, although not as strong, is also present in the management of this school. It is the last priority here. The year 7's and 8's I work with only receive 1.5 hours of class time a week. 1 double period a week. They find it very difficult to actually retain any learning because there is only a small amount of time to recycle previous learning and they do not, generally, do homework. I have surveyed all of my year 8 classes (six of them) and they stated that if they had more time in Indonesian they would be able to learn it and actually use the language.

The future of LOTE is hard to foretell but I believe it will remain mainly in schools where the study of another language is appreciated by the school, the parents and therefore the students. Staffing is a major issue and I believe this can be solved in various ways. Retraining older teachers is definitely not the answer in my opinion. Opening the job market to native speakers who live in Indonesia can relieve this burden. There are many qualified and adaptable Indonesian people who would relish the chance to gain employment in Australia, especially in education.


 **17** I've noticed that some new students are better at picking up Japanese than many of their Australian counterparts.

The new system is not advocating the need to learn a language for communicative purposes, rather, for thinking skills. I believe both are important, especially if the student is going to be fully prepared for higher level education in the LOTE.

 **18** Regarding question 169- I would love to involve native speakers in my class and I know a couple of my students would love it too. However I'm just too afraid of how the students would treat this visitor. They can be so rude and disrespectful; I just don't think they could behave for a whole hour.

Regarding question 174- Student progress in languages is supposed to be reported on as thoroughly as others, but at our school, teachers who teach English, Maths, Science or SOSE have FAR fewer reports to write. Language teachers teach many more classes and this means its harder for us to assess and report well.


I don't suppose it's possible but I just think that smaller classes taught more often would make teaching and learning more effective for everyone. This probably means it becomes an elective after year 7.

 **19** I have the opportunity to work in a school that is specially funded under a Vic DET initiative called the Language Centres of Excellence. Part of our role and my role in particular is to share the work we are doing with LOTE teachers around the state. Our focus is on the integration of ICT into the teaching of LOTE, and we have extensive funds to invest in this. We are beginning to see some positive results from this in regards to motivation and engagement, we are not so sure what the impact on retention will be as is has been going for a little less than two years with only one more year of funding to go.


I find it disheartening that other schools we come into contact with will never get the kind of funding we've received to enhance their programs in the way

that we have been able to. So we try to provide the best support and resources that we can through a website we have been developing over the life of the project. But as the funding is all about to cease, it is difficult to see what will happen at the end of this process.

(Contact details supplied)

 **20** I really would like schools particularly primary offer LOTE at least 60 minutes for all students each week. If we are looking at successful and achievable learnings in High School with VELs implemented.

I also would like VCE Cantonese get approved by VCAA because there are so many students who study Cantonese at the weekend ethnic school from Year 1 - Year 9. Unfortunately these students have to take VCE Mandarin as their VCE subjects, because there is no Cantonese in VCE. What a waste of these 9 years!!!! Not only it will be fair on the students, also students from these Cantonese classes will not feel like down graded when they do VCE.

 **21** Very few staff in my school have studied a LOTE or achieved a level of proficiency in a LOTE. This makes it very difficult for them (and others) to understand or fully appreciate the value of learning languages.

-Some parents mistakenly believe that learning a LOTE may disadvantage their student's ability to learn English well. As a LOTE / ESL teacher my experience suggests otherwise.


-Lack of fixed and allocated funding for LOTE\LOTE teachers from the department has seen a downgrading of LOTE classes in the school in the past decade.

-Lack of support at Federal Government level, reflected in the abandonment of the NALSASS programme has also been detrimental to the provision of LOTE in my school

-Lack of understanding of the extra time demands of character-based languages means that these languages are not adequately resourced.

-Native speaker assistance (paid) for Mandarin is not resourced by either federal government or Victorian DEET yet this would prove of great benefit to non-native speaking teachers, especially in classes with students of Chinese background. The range of students experience and knowledge of Mandarin or other dialects is likely to be far greater than other languages in Victorian schools yet this does not appear to be recognized or catered for in either policy or practice

(Contact details supplied)

 **22** Several schools in this area have discontinued the teaching of languages lately due to a perception that if there is no financial incentive to teach languages, it is not worth the effort to find teachers. Over the last few weeks I have heard of a few secondary schools, who are cutting down on their language learning.


I have taught at different schools and the one I am at is more supportive of language learning than others. My fellow language teacher at my school and I are nevertheless very concerned about the future of language teaching at our school, as the subject is elective from Year 8 upwards. We are a country school of about 440 students and have had two classes at year 8 and then a class all the way to year 12 for the past years. Every year around subject selection time (at this time of the year) the stress levels of languages teachers are up, as the survival of the language program depends on the subject choices the kids make. Often students succumb to the peer pressure of the more vocal students, as for them it often is not "cool" to learn a language. It is hard to compete with subjects like Ceramics, Drama, PE and the like. If we make it fun and don't work the students too hard with regards to grammar etc. in the early years, we can get a bigger cohort of students to continue with their language studies. A result of this will generally be lower Year 12 results compared to many other schools, where language learning is more an elite thing to do and students had more language learning time in a week and more years.

My school is introducing a major change in the Year 7 and Year 8 curriculum next year, with a new building for integrated learning. This will mean that if a student chooses Languages, he/she won't be able to have any other electives - which might mean lower numbers choosing languages and therefore the languages program dying out.

When I have to answer the question of whether I am satisfied with my job - I am very satisfied teaching languages, but at the same time it is very difficult to achieve academic rigour by Year 12 and at the same time have enough students choose this subject in years 8-12, if there is an easier way out for them.


(Our school offers several languages excursions and an overseas school exchange program just for language students - which are some of the carrots we offer.)

Thanks for letting me have my say.


 **23** I think there needs to be an ongoing community awareness campaign that emphasises the importance of language learning for our world - for improved understanding and for improved communication.


If the community sees the intrinsic value of not being a monolingual nation, then schools will be obliged to follow suit and students will be supported in their choices.

I want to live in world open to many perspectives, not just an Anglophone perspective.

 **24** I teach Indonesian to year 7 and year 8. The year 7 students are eager to learn the language, by year 8 it has become an elective, the students' minds appear to have closed to language learning. I have broadened the course, introducing lots of 'hands on' cultural activities; however the 'Languages on Line' programme has been successful with the difficult year eights (computer supported learning.)

Happy to help further in any way I can.
(Contact details supplied)

 **25** To me the whole issue is one of priorities by the governments. If they think it important then they subsidise and the converse. What could be achieved if they actively supported teachers and LOTE teaching and gave it the resources needed. As usual governments are merely looking for the vote and every change is instigated in order to be seen to be vote catching. The big question I would like to be answered is briefly touched on in this survey:-
Would the government send their kids to some/many of the struggling GOVERNMENT schools who have to act out every whim on call!
It is time ALL students ALL schools were resourced the way the private system is - then we would have equality for all.
Thanks for this opportunity!

 **26** One of the biggest problems here in Australia from one recently arrived from Europe (less than 10 years), is the vast number of teachers frequently in positions of influence and authority, Heads of Departments/Faculties, still teaching by grammar/translation method, refusing to recognise the usefulness of ICT in the language classroom, using outdated textbooks, and perhaps worst of all, teaching snippets of "culture" as a separate subject divorced from any connection with language.

Even in private schools where resources and time allocation are not a problem, if such a condition prevails because of the person in charge of selecting and directing the Language Programme, then the result will continue to be falling numbers, particularly boys, and a level of competence both cultural and linguistic well below European standards.

If you swim against such a tide and try to teach in an innovative fashion, you will create problems for yourself of varying degrees of seriousness within your position in the department.

✍ 27 The main concern here is the lack of parental support for languages. We are often told by parents that learning a language is a waste of time, not relevant to the future of their students and I have been told by a parent that language teachers are a waste of Government resources. So until parents change their primitive views, languages will continue to struggle to be accepted.

✍ 28 In our school the curriculum is cluttered. Language program in later Years is not that popular because against a soft target Sport/PE. Most students have influenced by other students to do sport and lack support from parents. The leaderships in schools also play major role in supporting language program, so do the course counselling teachers. Students still do not understand the benefit to learn other language for collecting a high ENTER score for Tertiary Education. They still (think) learning other language is too hard!

In our school language only introduced from years 3/4 to later year. It should be from Prep. They have reduced our time slot in years 5/6 and 7/8 from 3 hour a week to 2 hour a week for next year. Language program is always being push with other subjects. They still need to review the language program.

✍ 29 I believe that the monolingual nature of teachers is a bigger impediment to the teaching of languages than the attitudes of a few parents. Some teachers without a second language have had negative experiences in language classes at school themselves.


I do think that language teaching has improved greatly over the past few years and that the resources for teaching literacy skills as part of LOTE are improving all the time.


I found your question about behaviour interesting - I can not imagine why language classes would have any more problems with behaviour than any other classes. I teach Maths and Indonesian - it is often easier to engage students in secondary language classes than Maths classes.


Languages in schools can be strengthened by:


- the provision of language assistant programs (native speakers) - this assists with the intercultural/ cross cultural studies and language components - I have written to the PM about using the AUSAID students from Indonesia for this - perhaps a commitment of 1 day a week/fortnight to schools for an additional payment on their scholarship - this assists the foreign students understanding of Australian culture too.

-language specific classrooms - that establish a culture of language learning
-in country or specific immersion language learning opportunities for language teachers
-sharing of resources between language teachers needs to be better facilitated.

 30 We have some difficulty in involving parents at our school in many aspects of the school. Some of these comments how found difficult to respond to as I am aware that I would probably have a more positive response than other language teachers at the school. There is a difficulty in our area that many of the primary schools offer a limited number of languages (Italian). Therefore, if other languages are offered in the secondary school, kids tend to choose an alternative if they did not like LOTE at primary school and one LOTE may get more of kids who are unsuccessful at LOTE. Conversely, kids tend to choose the LOTE offered in primary schools and not try another. It is also very difficult to get kids to study LOTE beyond year 10. They have other more enticing choices.


 31 I am somewhat dissatisfied in my job due to various happenings in my school - firstly we are constantly needing to explain the relevance of LOTE to colleagues and management. Secondly, there is little support for staff in the ongoing discipline of students who constantly act up in LOTE classes. Whilst I love teaching LOTE, I find it difficult to get myself 'up' for every day, when many students do not see the relevance of it, due to the attitudes of other teachers, their parents and friends. It is also difficult to sustain a solid program with insufficient time allocation.


 32 Some issues facing language teaching:
-overall shortage of language teachers resulting in
-poorly trained teachers
-lack of continuity between primary and secondary
-language taught in primary can be dependant on whether teacher for that language is available
-Australia and English-speaking countries in general, place lesser significance on language learning
- a more co-ordinated approach from primary to tertiary is necessary to ensure optimum results
-Higher profile and importance is necessary to inform parents of the overall educational benefits of language learning


 33 I believe the only way to strengthen languages in school would be to make them compulsory in some way or another for the VCE. It is really only

the unis that can do this, otherwise languages will continue to be seen as they always have been seen. ie not important.


 34 [We need more funding where and how?](#)

 35 My concern is the lack of proficient LOTE teachers in Victoria. I think it is because the pay is not attractive enough for young people who can earn much more in other fields. What is needed is a national campaign about the teaching profession to attract enthusiastic and intelligent language teachers. I am very lucky because I teach in a school where language learning is valued and where we have excellent resources and the support of parents who want their children to learn a LOTE. But I know it is not the case in a lot of schools. (Contact details supplied)

 36 [The major issue I have is the lack of the department allocating a classroom for LOTE so that the students can be immersed in the language with posters, etc.](#)

 37 I think that parents should be given some consideration and more than one language should be offered in all secondary schools, otherwise students become resentful to being forced to do a specific language as apposed to choosing one.

 38 [LOTE at our school is Auslan \(sign language\) and I feel that this has not been given the same level of attention as other languages. It is a relevant and important language in Australia and should be better recognised by Education Departments across Australia.](#)


 39 I'm from Victoria where I have taught French for 29 years. I taught my daughter who went on to university to study International Studies and Spanish, thinking Spanish and French would be good languages to know. Her university didn't offer French at her level. She may do Honours in Spanish


At my school we have actively encouraged LOTE study and have run language camps, study tours to the LOTE speaking countries and provided scholarships to students to study for a short time in a target language country.

Parents should encourage and promote language study in my opinion because I have taken kids from remote areas to another country and seen them respond positively to another language and culture. Sometimes, I get a bit discouraged, but manage to bounce back and keep going. I have many

opinions and thoughts and may be willing to share them. I deleted many from this e-mail. Contact me if you wish. Cheers.

(Contact details supplied)

 **40** I feel that at my school all the children should learn LOTE not just the literacy competent children in grades five/six.


 **41** I am very concerned that at the Primary Level LOTE is not taught as a KLA subject. It is a joke and often hinders students rather than helps them to enjoy a LOTE in secondary schools. In the country of my birth we learn our own native language as well as English. I remember that when I was in Year 6 I wrote letters to my Australian, American and Canadian relatives in good English. Why can't we reach that standard in our Australian schools with the LOTE(s) taught in our Primary schools?

There needs to be an all campaign to educate parents that LOTE is useful. I am sick of hearing parents saying to their children not worry about LOTE, to take subjects that are useful and the like. Sometimes there are even overtones of racism.

In my very strong opinion a LOTE should be compulsory in Year 12 for all students. In the majority of countries in the world it is so.


Finally, teachers of LOTE should be given more incentives, which include training in Australia and the country of the LOTE with perhaps, exemptions of 2 units for their degree so more time could be spent on the LOTE, pecuniary incentives to be seen as teachers who are appreciated and not tolerated as some LOTE teachers are seen in some schools.

 **42** More PD on effective teaching strategies in LOTE is needed! I would like to see more ICT resources allocated and sharing of resources.

 **43** My biggest issue is why Chinese is taught more in community schools but not offered in Public High Schools? Japanese is very popular but is not a community language. Chinese is learnt by many students outside school hours but is not offered by our school because of lack of qualified teachers. Despite NALSAS Chinese still lags well behind Japanese. Why will not the Chinese parents push for this inclusion? It mimics what happen with Greek schools and the relevance to university can be seen by the very few students who carry it on to university.


Other issue is Indonesian is almost dead. Numbers are dropping off and no school trips to Indonesia. Even Deakin Uni is thinking of switching to Malaysian as an alternative. Chinese could replace Indonesian but then Indonesian teachers would be out of a job.

(Contact details supplied)

 **44** Languages and other core curriculum areas are being overshadowed by the push for 'integrated curriculum'. Within the models being forwarded, language learning opportunities would be limited, at best.

There seems to be a lack of understanding of the need for regular revision, repetition and specialist tuition required for significant progress for students and, therefore, positive attitudes towards language learning. It is the latter which, in my opinion, leads to continuing with languages at senior secondary and tertiary levels.

Until government funding ensures that all schools are able to offer guaranteed senior language classes, teaching languages will be a struggle. At present, small classes are often 'knocked on the head'. As a result, students at lower year levels and their parents are more likely to discontinue language learning when they are able so as not to put at risk their subject selections.

 **45** I think LOTE teaching in the Primary schools is joke. It is a KLA subject but it is not given its proper status. In my country of birth the native language and English are taught and both are given equal weighting is by Year 6 students are fairly proficient in English e.g. I could writing letters in good English to my Australian, American and Canadian relatives.


In my opinion parents should be educated towards accepting LOTE as important. They often tell their children not to worry about LOTE and to choose subjects that are useful rather than LOTE.

Principals often are hostile to LOTE. They do not treat LOTE as a KLA. As a KLA it should be compulsory up to Year 10 level. In some schools a LOTE is often presented as a cultural subject with little language study.

I am of the opinion that one LOTE should be compulsory for all Year 12 students. This is the norm for most countries.

Teachers should be encouraged and given incentives to teach LOTE. Through educating parents and students to accept LOTE as important it would make their work easy. Degrees should be created for LOTE study with relevant methodology included.

(Note the similarity to response 41 earlier - this person apparently completed two surveys)

 **46** There really needs to be stronger co-ordination between the Primary school LOTE programs and the Secondary school programs. At the moment, many Primary schools programs are poorly staffed and there is no continuum.

✍ 47 I believe language teaching and learning in Australia should be strengthened as we are increasingly part of the global community. This needs the support of both the state and federal governments allocating sufficient resources to implement the programs in schools, as well as for tertiary institutions to train qualified teachers to carry out the program in schools. More can also be done in the area of promoting languages in the wider community and making them accessible to students.

✍ 48 Languages should be taught right throughout the Primary school, it is very disappointing that there is a lack of qualified teachers able to work in the Primary system. The government needs to put money into educating teachers in languages as there is a desperate need for these skills and it is always the country and rural schools that miss out. The lack of flow on in the Primary schools into the Secondary schools is disappointing.

✍ 49 Some questions are difficult to respond to when considering different groups within the school. Time is always an issue. Many teachers have excellent ideas and would love to implement great things but time is never there.

✍ 50 Feed back - the www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/languagesonline is a huge success as part of the Ashby language learning program.
- the competitions run by the Association of German Teachers of Victoria and the Goethe Institute are highly inspirational and an effective way of promoting the use of language. The AGTV and the Goethe Institute offer so much assistance, advice and support, that without them, I feel that I would not have pushed through the difficulties that arise in teaching-the politics and the lack of appreciation of language learning. It can be very wearing. The support that colleagues in the area of Geelong have given over the last 12 years of teaching has been crucial to my continuing through the hard yards. I am the only language teacher at the primary school and working alone is sometimes daunting. It has been marvellous and a delightful boost to have a language assistant provided by DET. I have really appreciated this opportunity.
At Ashby there are many parents who make it their business to encourage me and who will assist in classroom activities or just stay in the class to enjoy the language learning and activities. A huge boost to morale.

✍ 51 Our Language program uses ICT to cater for different learning abilities. This enables students to learn LOTE at their own pace and also helps for motivation.

✍ 52 I have just completed teacher professional leave, with my topic - "Literacy amelioration through LOTE: a new focus on student learning". I observed and surveyed LOTE teachers in primary and high schools and I found that -

- (1) LOTE teachers can support (through testing and observation), that learning a second or third language, increases the students proficiency in the English language;
- (2) there is a shortage of LOTE teachers; and
- (3) parents do not view the teaching of LOTE as important.

I am happy to make further (Contact details supplied)

✍ 53 Depending on a community, parents can be considered a mighty asset in developing future directions. However some communities are so opposed to such work, ignorant of language issues or hold racist opinions, that it's too daunting to have them involved with planning.

I say this without any prejudice. I was brought up with European language training and knew many people opposed to such steps. Later I studied Indonesian as a major and also attempted a course in Korean, which sadly was too onerous with content.

I believe in languages opening up huge horizons for all children.

Our colleagues generally don't want to know the LOTE course or its integration potential. This makes it difficult to implement. Also many principals are inclined to "duck-shove" the LOTE for other more important political decisions and subjects.

The Ed Dept does not make it binding on all parties.

✍ 54 It is not clear whether special funding is available to cover small classes when LOTE becomes elective - this used to be the case but it appears to have been discontinued. The nature of funding needs to be transparent as it seems that it may be getting diverted to other uses. Small classes are essential for LOTE when it becomes an elective - otherwise the school has to make up the numbers with other students - e.g. students who are late handing in forms or trouble makers not wanted in other classes.

✍ 55 Languages in schools can best be strengthened by increasing the weekly minimum time devoted to language learning. In most secondary schools, languages such as English and Maths are prioritised from Year 7

onwards, with at least four sessions and often five sessions per week, which addresses the requirements of language learning.

By contrast, a LOTE is often allocated three classes per week in Years 7-10, and in many primary schools, LOTE is a token offering of one session per week. In some secondary schools, the number of LOTE classes per week is increased at VCE as proper, albeit late, recognition of the requirements of LOTE learning.

It is my view that this recognition at VCE is too late. Regular practice is an essential component of language learning, and this needs to be acknowledged for effective LOTE learning and curriculum delivery. An increased number of weekly classes gives due recognition to the value of LOTE and sends this message throughout the school and wider communities. It also affirms the value and the importance of an Australian society which is inclusive and multi-cultural.

 56 This is a big question. Off the top of my head I think it comes down to two areas.

The first one is a culture of not valuing languages education. My area is very working class and Anglo-Saxon so it may be accentuated more for me than if I was teaching in an area with a higher percentage of non Anglo-Saxon Aussies. The kids parrot what their parents say at home and mirror their attitudes in class, so it often feels like a real battle to sell the subject. I cling to the rare gems of comments from the few parents that do value it and express their appreciation, it keeps me going. Most of the staff at the school also reflect a culture of not valuing a second language in the way they do not support the program or are quick to find excuses not to deliver it, or learn a few words to support the program in their classes. I have my own Year 5/6 now and just teach to them, the class next door and feed ideas to the others in the hope that they take it on, but it's always too hard. So there needs to be a campaign of changing the cultural attitudes and this takes time and probably some clever spending of money. Easier said than done I know.

The second area is a lack of political will and funding. By political will I mean, it can't be just mandated that schools must deliver a LOTE without the proper resources and support to do so. There needs to be a real leadership role shown here from the top down. there needs to be incentives to train as language teachers and then there needs to be a careful plan on a regional level so that the LOTE delivery is co-ordinated, from Primary through, maybe this may mean some LOTE's need to be dropped, a very tricky problem in some communities, they all want their own language to be taught. I mean so that the kids can continue with the LOTE they learnt in Primary all the way through. Maybe we need to look at the way the European schools manage it all. I know kids in German and Belgium secondary schools are learning 3

languages at one stage as a compulsory course requirement. Can't imagine that here, but I think we may be poorer in many ways for it.

✍ 57 When schools were provided with extra funding for Asian programs from the Commonwealth - many programs began to become well-resourced and teachers were inspired and enthusiastic to teach the language. Since the demise of those grants, and then the closing of the LOTE section in the DET Vic, and then just recently a diminished support by allocating extra LOTE teacher funding to schools, then it has become increasingly difficult to fight for languages in school. When you feel that you are given some backing from the government, then it is much easier to push the LOTE barrel at the school.

Added to this is also the reduced number of leading teachers in schools. This has also been an issue with many LOTE leading teacher positions having been demoted to Teacher with Extra Responsibility positions, whilst Science, Maths, SOSE etc have retained positions as LEADING Teachers.


As a teacher of Indonesian it is also highly frustrating that we are unable to take students to Indonesia on study trips due to the government warning. This has made it again more difficult to enthuse and motivate students to want to continue to learn Indonesian. I have gone from a high of 30 Indonesian students at the Year 12 level to a low next year of only 9 students.

So to me it seems that there are several things that can be done to Strengthen Languages in School

1. Increased funding to resource LOTE programs in the schools.
2. In-country experience is essential for teachers to teach the language effectively and teachers training to teach the language should have a compulsory in-country study.
3. Funding should be more readily available for LOTE teachers to attend MEANINGFUL PD. Hands-on PD such as sharing ideas with each other, immersion days, and watching other teachers in action would help. AT present many LOTE PD days are run at weekends, meaning that most LOTE teachers are required to forgo many a weekend in order to develop professionally. It is also interesting to note that LOTE organisations such as AGTV, VILTA are all run voluntarily, whilst other KLA areas have organisations with paid employees.
4. Access to native speakers is essential. It is terrific that languages such as German, French and Japanese have some access to language assistants. Again as an Indonesian teacher we are unable to access this type of assistant, and must beg principals for some money to be found to employ assistants perhaps 1 hour a week to help with Year 12 students. A funding issue again???
5. At times in Victoria the VCE exams seems to be aimed at an elite level of student. Exams should be challenging yet accessible to all levels of students. as students are often faced with the question - why bother learning a

language- we need to counter this by encouraging students to want to continue studying the language, not just to VCE but beyond the school system, and we do this by allowing students some sense of achievement.

6. LOTE training for ALL teachers is also important - the LOTE staff at my school are constantly having to educate the staff themselves on the importance of LOTE, and how LOTE can be beneficial to not only travel opportunities, and increased scores, but also to opening their minds to the world, improving their literacy skills in English, and preparing them for an increasingly globalised community. (This can sometimes apply to some LOTE staff themselves, who thought teaching the language, have had no LOTE training, and in themselves cannot see the added benefits of teaching LOTE for students

 **58** Verbal support is given to the importance of languages at my school. As yet, it has not been followed up by provision of adequate language classrooms (there are no dedicated classrooms for LOTE), nor have class sizes been reduced to allow proper language learning. It is, after all, a practical subject, where a lot of verbal interaction should take place. Many obstacles are placed in the way of students accessing exchange opportunities, because our school is super careful, protective and super mindful of moral responsibilities as well as the possibility of litigation. Only now are we embarking on our first group exchange program.

I feel that discipline in the language classes at my school is very varied, but we have very good support.

More and more I hear adults say that they wish they had learned a language at school, or they wish they had paid attention. It's because we as a society are more in touch with the global community.

Both Asian and European languages have their place. If it were my call, I would make one of each compulsory. Asian languages, because they are the gateway to entirely different cultures, and European, because they help us understand our own culture, history and language better.

My biggest frustration as a teacher is the lack of time I have for developing ICT skills, that would be very useful in my teaching, as well as having inadequate time to incorporate new ideas (and produce the teaching materials that go with them) into the classroom. I am overloaded with ideas, that I don't have time to implement. It also bothers me that most of the other language teachers at my school are not very interested in going to PD days.

I would also like to see more curricula integrated with languages.

✍ 59 As a teacher of language, I really enjoy teaching the students in my classes (most of the time anyway), but I don't enjoy the continual battle to justify my KLA to the leadership team, other KLAs, parents and some students. I did have a principal who was committed to LOTE but since she left, it has been very hard to maintain the whole-school commitment to languages.

Language is important. We don't refer to maths as 'compulsory'- rather as 'core'. I use this term to refer to LOTE. There has been significant funding and resources committed to the "middle years" and dealing with student-disengagement. This affects all of the KLAs, but if a student is resistant to learning in a LOTE, then this is often viewed as 'acceptable', as it is just "LOTE". Some parents are not very concerned if their students are not doing well in a LOTE.

We should not be asking students to choose their VCE (Victoria) pathway at Year 8 or 9 when their hormones are crazy etc. We should offer them choice within how and what they learn about in the LOTE, but not the choice of whether they do it or not.

Many English teachers believe that learning a LOTE will interfere with the literacy of the students, as do Speech Pathologists - and some coordinators of Special Needs programs. There are many snipers around every corner waiting to get rid of LOTE from a student's program ASAP.

Universities in Melbourne have taken LOTE-specific methodology classes out of their Dip.Ed programs. How can that be healthy for maintaining your language proficiency or learning the tricks of the trade in the specific LOTE. Some strategies are generic, but it is ludicrous to think you can completely learn about teaching another language ONLY in English.

There are many examples of how learning a language has positively impacted on people's lives, but these are not generally celebrated. I often wish a 'good news' story would turn up on 'Home and Away' or 'Neighbours' to influence the attitude of students.

There are also many instances of wonderful and innovative and successful programs in schools where students experience success. I am not always sure this is valued as highly by the school or community as it should be. It should not be a surprise that students can do well in languages, but it should be well-known that they can.

The myth about languages being too hard persist. I really like the European Framework for Languages for the way it honours all language learning. Looking at the levels A1 - C2, you can see how all levels of proficiency are valued, and recognised for what you can and can not do yet. Students are not

given a grade (eg A or E), but are commended for achieving a level. It is also recognised that it takes a lot of hours to achieve such a level. Language portfolios honour all contact with and achievement in learning languages. It seems such a logical way to proceed.

If this is how the Europeans are choosing to assess language learning, then why do we try to invent a different model?

One of the main reasons - I believe - for principals' reluctance to be totally supportive of LOTE, is teacher supply. If you can't find a 'good' teacher, then what can you do? It is most disappointing though when a Principal or School Council decide LOTE is not important (especially in the Primary school) and dump a program when they do have a LOTE teacher.

The situation is much improved than say 25 years ago, but the recent lack of public policy has lead to a winding back of programs.

I believe that there are many great programs for LOTE, and that if we could only shift community attitudes (school community and beyond) then we can increase the numbers studying LOTE. There has to be comprehensive and sustained and public commitment to LOTE. I believe that LOTE teachers do wonderful things considering the limited resources, support and time that they have. Imagine what they could achieve if they had the full support of the community.


(Contact details supplied)

 **60** Lack of collegiate support is an issue.

-Use of native speakers as teachers often is ineffective as discipline issues are often high; lack of English makes it difficult to communicate with colleagues, students and parents.


-Schools often offer very part-time jobs that are not attractive to teachers hence seeming lack of qualified teachers. Teachers cannot connect to a school they visit one day a week, non-Australian citizens need full-time work for their visa, workload issue of teaching 1/2 hour classes one on top of the other, doesn't allow for good planning or in-depth program.


-Secondary school teaching methodology stuck in a text book, often irrelevant and not connected to students.

 **61** I believe that the availability of ICT in classrooms, especially PCs, is one of the greatest weaknesses in our school system.


The Governments talk it up as a major need but the number of functional PCs available to teachers in many classrooms is nil. If a classroom has 5 PCs the admin feels this is OK but it is only window dressing and lip service.

I have taught LOTE in 6 schools and in one of them I had access to the computer room. The standard of learning was fantastic and engagement was never a problem.

 **62** In primary school, students do not participate in 150 minutes of language tuition per week. Most schools only provide a 30 minute to 60 minute lesson per week. Therefore, the students are at a much lower level in LOTE than in all other domains. I always need to explain to parents the reason why their child is in a lower level in LOTE. It can be quite frustrating at times when you realise that even though students have been studying a LOTE since Prep by the end of year 6 they have very limited language in LOTE. Teachers cannot provide a full language program due to time constraints in individual schools and always lack of funding. In spite of this, an enthusiastic and experienced LOTE teacher is the best motivator for a student's love of languages.

 **63** I find that the schedule of rooms for a specialist teacher to teach in is restricted to teachers of music, Art, Library, and PE. LOTE does not get a look in, so principals and other administrators simply think that LOTE can be taught in the classrooms. This is extremely frustrating as we as language teachers have to contend with table groupings that we can reorganise, but have to replace before the one hour lesson ends. We also have to contend with the lack of board space to write on as the class teacher has filled his/her board for the day.


Governments need to add into the room schedule a LOTE allocation. Then Principals will know that the government is serious about teaching LOTE. Also accountability of funding for LOTE needs to be looked at. At the present time the LOTE funding is included in the Student Resource Package. The principals do not have to show that they have spent the LOTE allocation on a teacher of LOTE. In other words too many principals are stopping LOTE programs as they want to use the money elsewhere, and because there is no accountability they are getting away with closing down programs. Also, time allocations in primary schools is a joke. If we are to have students attain Level 4 VELs by the end of Year 6 there needs to be more time allocated to the teaching of a language. I have often argued that teaching a LOTE is teaching a literacy and therefore the LOTE lesson could be included as part of the literacy block, but too many administrators lack the gumption to do anything at all.

 **64** To whom it may concern,


I strongly believe that a well-maintained network between primary and secondary schools in the same area is integral in promoting Languages in schools. With the withdrawal of the NALSAS funding, this has been extremely difficult. Whilst our language program includes primary school visits, the impact and effectiveness of such visits are limited.

I further believe that the government, both state and federal, are not investing enough resources in creating a tolerant, well-informed generation that cares about world issues and is well-equipped to contribute to a better world.

I welcome further correspondence on the matters raised in this survey. Please feel free to contact me on (Contact details supplied)

 **65** University training for language teachers in Victoria emphasises practical school issues, pedagogy, sociology, PoLT etc. but allows people with extremely weak language skills into the teaching profession. In my opinion, to be a professional, convincing language teacher, a person must be at least prepared to spend some time in an immersion situation. Just like a maths teacher needs to have a solid knowledge of all aspects of their area, and an outdoor ed. teacher must be familiar with the terrain and conditions as well as some medical knowledge to lead students on an excursion.


We need more time during the week... so the work can be followed up. Integrated studies seem to be the way to go, let us encourage art classes or ICT in LOTE so that the budgets don't feel so restricted!

 **66** One of the major obstacles for teaching languages is the time factor. Firstly it is not uncommon for language contact hours to be reduced when National or state funding is reduced. Many schools are not prepared to make up the shortfall to ensure continuity of hours in the program.

Secondly there are many programs that operate less than one an hour per week per class. This makes it very difficult to deliver a wholesome and motivating program with good outcomes. Often parents cannot understand why children are not fluent in the language when they have been learning the language for so long.

Thirdly many language teachers are forced to work at two or more schools to ensure sufficient working hours. This adds much more pressure to these teachers as they are trying to meet the specific requirements of multiple work places while trying to teach their language program to the needs of students and schools. Often there is doubling of work e.g work programs, language days, competitions, assessment, yard duty, meetings, after hours commitments.

Fourthly Language teacher's conditions are most vulnerable: hours can be reduced at any time; the language timetable is at the discretion of others, often organised to fit in with other programs first; our language room if we are fortunate to have one can be taken away when another classroom is needed for increased classes or priority given to other programs and most importantly we never feel secure in our position as ongoing language teachers as we are constantly working with the knowledge that the funding for our programs is at risk and so we are not confident from one year to the next whether our program will continue or be cut down.

 67 I am very concerned at the lack of young teachers training to be LOTE teachers. We never have any student teachers. There is a huge number of 50 something female French teachers. What provision is being made for the future?


 68 Things that would help:

Graded courses. This is essential for cumulative learning. Instead, we often have a high turnover of students of different ability. Difficult students are "dumped" in language classes and students who want to do VCE languages are discouraged because the school is small and VCE coordinators prefer to favour other choices.

Fair budgets. LOTE is usually the curriculum area with the smallest budget and often teachers are not even allowed to spend what has been allocated to them.

Discipline support. Problems in this curriculum area tend to be attributed to the teacher, her accent, her methodology etc, without any fair analysis of the situation. Consequences for misbehaviour should be the same regardless of where they happened.


Recognition of good practice. This should happen at a state level because individual achievements may be ignored or undermined in a small setting. Teachers should be given opportunities to showcase their materials, for instance giving workshops at the LMRC.

 69 As a language teacher, I have a Masters of Education, specialising in language teaching (ESL), I find that the level of ability expected of students is far too high when I compare the levels expected of ESL students wanting to attend university!

If you consider that a student would only have at a maximum 1 year of accumulated intensive language learning for their primary years, the high school curriculum has enormous expectations of the speaking/listening abilities of the average student.

During my studies of ESL, I was asked to study research that states it takes up to 7 years for a person, who is committed, to learn a second language effectively.

I would like to see a more user friendly curriculum, in which parents as well as students could learn the target language. I think curriculum days for parents, in which they are introduced to aspects of language learning and teaching would be of enormous benefit. I did not learn my second language (Italian) until I was in my 40s' at university, and I found it the most difficult, but rewarding thing I have ever done. It has helped me understand the difficulties faced by non English speaking parents of student. I would like to see more integration with parents who do speak the target language participating, such as telling stories, talking about the culture, involved with cultural activities etc...to encourage students to see that language learning can be extremely valuable and enlighten them to the difficulties of our migrant population.

 70 * If languages are to be taught properly, then more funding should be allocated in the Primary Years when children are more willing to learn a language. Teachers and students alike are frustrated with the dismal 30 or 40 minutes a week which is so typical for Primary Schools. Yet, achievement expectations as outlined in our curriculum documents (VELS) are based on 2.5 - 3 hr tuition. Doesn't make sense to me!!!! Students are turned off by the time they get to Grade 5 /6 because they expect to be more proficient at that level.

* Primary children do not have the same study ability skills as secondary students do and therefore need more contact time to recycle and revise known language. Only in this way will retention occur. In European/ Asian countries where language learning is taken more seriously and is better understood, more time is allocated at both the Primary and Secondary level.

* Language Learning is different to learning a body of language as per other disciplines. It is a skill like learning a musical instrument for example. If not practised regularly that skill WILL NOT improve quickly. Students who learn a musical instrument are usually encouraged to practise daily. It therefore makes sense that more contact time is required.

* Language teachers NEED a Language Room!!! Mobile language teaching is slave labour in my opinion. It clearly puts the status of language learning at the bottom of list and students acknowledge this. I have now a Language room at one school and at my other school the Library Room is also a LOTE

room. If I lose my Language room again I will strongly consider quitting as a language teacher.

 71 I have taught at Grovedale College since 1999...

Though I enjoy the job and work at a very professional government school, we face the same sorts of frustrations as many schools.


Time allocations have been gradually cut for example (Only 2 sessions per week for year 9 now, which is a double session. Hard to maintain continuity)

Compulsory only to end of year 8 (was till end of year 9 when I started)

Blocked against other more "fun" subjects (rock climbing/cooking etc. so what hope do we have? Students like language, but often choose easier, fun things!)


I have been teaching combined 11/12 VCE for 3 years now, but am still expected to get top VCE results, to compete against "like" schools. It's hard...

Gambarimashoo!!!!
Best Regards,
(Contact details supplied)

 72 The teaching and learning of Languages in Australian schools is of an extremely high standard, however the time allocation is abysmal. This is reflected in the level of language and intercultural competence students are able to achieve, as well as in the poor reporting. I teach 800 students per week in 36 30-40 minute classes at 2 schools. The scant reporting of students reflects this time allocation, which in turn reflects the school's weighting of Language compared to other curriculum areas.

I do not find this weighting 'wrong'. It reflects the crowded curriculum in Victorian schools. The problem lies in that the DEET expectations are so far away from what I can achieve with students that I am effectively supported NOT AT ALL by the department.


 73 Make a LOTE a pre-requisite for relevant university courses.

 74 There is concern over the reporting of LOTE achievements in Victoria under VELs as it is late being implemented. The report will also be limited to senior primary grades. The LOTE section can also be deleted from the VELs


report. Schools feel they can delay reporting and this is lowering the status of LOTE.

 75 Languages could be strengthened by providing better links to the outside community.

 76 Attracting LOTE teachers then keeping them is a real issue for country schools

 77 Language teaching has its drawbacks in the junior levels at secondary school where students are forced to learn certain languages as part of the curriculum. I think languages should be compulsory; however their implementation needs to be looked at. Teaching languages to senior students is such a pleasure as they respond enthusiastically to all classroom activities and want to be there. This cannot happen all the time in junior classes as there will always be some students who object to the idea of language learning, and often have parents who do not see the reasoning behind learning a language. I think further parent education about the benefits of language learning needs to be widely publicised to perhaps change this outlook. Schools also need to ensure that languages are given as much priority as other core subjects, if it is listed as a core subject, rather than see it more as an elective with not so much of a strong standing behind it. Teachers need to be trained more effectively in how to engage language students at the junior levels, making learning fun and interesting to them. There also needs to be incentives for students to continue language learning at the senior level. Often students have to drop their language studies at year 11 or 12 due to other subjects being required for university entry in to particular courses.


Languages can only be effectively taught and beneficial if classes are regular (every second day for example). Teaching language once a week just should not happen
(Contact details supplied)

 78 It can be a difficult situation having students who struggle with English in a language classroom because they often find learning a LOTE a struggle. They might enjoy the lessons, but they give up easier and can be disengaged because they often don't start work they think is too hard. The main concern is that these students can distract other students when they are having difficulty. At the same time, starting to learn a second language at the same time as other students can give some students with low literacy skills a chance to experience success with language, and therefore confidence. It does depend on though, the severity of a student's difficulty with English.


It is sad when students don't see the benefits of learning a second language when they have to make a choice earlier in their secondary schooling, but look back and wish they had when they know more about their career prospects and needs.


My school is a large College and in Year 8 students select whether to consider their chosen language and an elective in Year 9. Because the school is large, for timetabling reasons it is necessary to block languages against IT and Commerce. The problem is for students who are interested in these subjects and who have not had a chance to study these subjects before don't realise that they can pick up these subjects again later, but can't pick up a language again.

ICT could be the key to better engagement, if done properly.

 **79** I would like to see more funding made available to local network groups so that they can organise more cultural events to promote language learning.

Funding of 'after-school language sessions' for interested parents so they can assist their child/children with their language learning at home and within the broader community should be investigated.

 **80** In actual fact, although I have listed Wattleview as my school, they no longer employ a Specialist LOTE teacher as of the end of 2005. Throughout 2005 I was employed to teach the Level 4 grades, 5 grades at 40 minutes per week. Prior to that I was employed as a full time LOTE specialist teaching the entire school, 30 minutes per week for Prep to 2 and 45 minutes 3-6. I feel that each grade should receive at least one hour or LOTE instruction per week, even if this means combining LOTE and ICT or Art or another specialist subject. To offer no specialist instruction in LOTE whatsoever is evidence of where LOTE stands in the budget priorities of the school.

 **81** In no particular order are some of the many ideas that I have developed over more than 30 years as a LOTE teacher and coordinator: There needs to be more direct and on-going consultation between primary schools and secondary schools within a 'cluster' to better manage the transition between primary and secondary LOTE studies.


The state and federal governments should more regularly and actively promote the value and benefits of LOTE learning within the general community.

The state and/or federal government to provide sufficient funds for ALL interested senior LOTE students to continue their studies within their school,


without the need for combined classes or distance education, where a qualified teacher is available.

Companies advertising jobs that would be relevant for school leavers with LOTE skills should clearly state LOTE skills amongst the requirements / desirable skills for the job.

School principals should be better informed about the nature of LOTE teaching and learning and the issues facing LOTE teachers in trying to maintain viable programs from Years Prep to 12.


 **82** It is almost impossible to teach a language when you have 2 official 45 minutes periods a week, I think. We just don't have enough time allotment.

Every primary school should have a second language from at least year 4 on!


 **83** 1. I believe languages should be taught more thoroughly through both primary school and high school, however it is difficult when primary and secondary schools are separate, and teach different languages

2. I think most students are capable of learning a language, however from working with many students with literacy difficulties and learning problems, I feel it would be best to completely remove them from the class, so they do not get further behind in something they don't understand, and become a disruption to other students. *Character languages seem to be more of a problem for these students

3. Languages offer many choices in life, and also help to explore different cultures/lifestyles, which I believe is of great importance in promoting tolerance and acceptance of different beliefs and views, especially in areas that are more remote (ie not very multicultural area)

 **84** I believe that languages need more attention in the junior years of teaching. They are often only given between 3 and 4 periods, whereas other areas have 5 periods.

I also believe that due to VCE subject selection, LOTE often misses out as students feel that they must choose their science and maths subjects.

 **85** A skilled teacher can make any subject exciting, including the study of another language. I find it creatively and professionally satisfying to track students' progress in my classroom.

✍ 86 It is difficult to achieve student selection of LOTE at year 9 to 12 when it is put up as a choice against many exciting sounding subjects which are offered for the first time. Students are curious about the subjects they have not taken before, especially when they can take up outdoor education with physical activity, forensic science and so on. When a junior group is depleted by withdrawal for ESL, Literacy support... and almost all are needed to continue to make middle school classes the situation becomes nigh on impossible. There are very few people with the skills to replace LOTE teachers, who are ill or on leave and the whole program falls apart.

✍ 87 Regular LOTE classes 3 sessions per week, supplemented by shared-teaching in a bilingual-style of presentation as a fourth learning experience/session per week ideally, even if with a target group of students in each class (difficult implications for staffing/funding of extra expertise-time). Consider the third session to be as above if funding/time/expertise is an issue.


✍ 88 I feel that local secondary colleges and their feeder schools should coordinate their language programs together, and perhaps even share teachers and resources for a more comprehensive and better program. We don't currently have LOTE classes, we have to learn about the culture in conjunction with the secondary school, mainly because of falling numbers and a lack of resources, and available LOTE teachers.


✍ 89 We teach Indonesian at our school and the current situation with the bombing and general anti Muslim sentiment being stirred up by our federal government has not helped promotion of this language in our area.


✍ 90 The only way that languages can be properly delivered in a Primary school is to recognise that you need specialist teachers and that these need to be granted over and above staffing entitlement so that there is no question as to how that resource is used. To staff the school by calculating that a language class needs a minimum of 2 and 1/2 hours contact time in a week to be classified as language learning and not language awareness; that is: if a school has 16 classes then there would be a need to have 2 full time teachers for languages.


✍ 91 I feel very privileged to be Head of LOTE at this school. I am able to conduct exchanges with other schools in all languages and employ our own language assistants. We enjoy strong support from the school executive and


have students who are keen to learn. I couldn't envisage anywhere better to teach languages.


 92 In rural areas money resources to allow schools to increase the access to native speakers either from the community and /or through incursions featuring native speakers bringing various cultural aspects to the classroom. (Contact details supplied)

 93 Encourage more young language teachers by offering incentives at Uni level.

 94 In our area language programs seem to have been weakened, with teachers citing the new VELs as their reason for doing so. Not at the school where I am currently employed. (Contact details supplied)

 95 There seems to be increasingly less opportunities to study languages at all the universities that offered courses/degrees for example, ten years ago. I personally would like to extend my expertise and am finding it very difficult to find a university that offers flexible courses for the study of languages. Part time studies are what teachers require, not full time ones. To do full time courses teachers need paid study leave as they do not qualify for Centrelink payments to assist further studies.

 96 I am well supported in my school setting with our language program. I have the full support of all staff. However, at other schools where my colleagues work, there is not the same support. I do not have each class for the recommended time allocation, but this is due to the crowded curriculum, not the school staff. I feel I run a well-rounded language program with past students doing very well when they move on to high school. The transition from primary to secondary is very difficult because so many feeder schools send their children to the high schools, with some of these feeder schools running effective programs and others doing very little. Consequently, the high school quite often repeats the work the children have covered at primary school and the children get bored and drop out eventually.


 97 Universities should offer more double degrees so that students focussing on other courses may combine a language study/degree, especially when they all promote international exchange.

Most universities in Victoria offer double degrees to include language study only with business, commerce or teaching. Monash offer a double degree with Art (Language) and Visual Arts (not other arts), RMIT offer the chance to do language as a brief elective in second or third year of Communication Design and Industrial Design - but that's all.

UTS in Sydney have two art courses that combine well with language (industrial design and communication design), UNSW combine an art or international (language) course with architecture, and ANU combine Visual Art with International Studies.

 98 The main issues with language teaching in my school are in order of high to less important.

- 1) difficulty in finding and keeping quality staff (in fact finding enough staff to cover classes)
- 2) lack of continuity from primary feeders to secondary (primary schools teach Indonesian & Japanese, while we only offer German & this year Samoan at yr 9)
- 3) lack of support from school & parents as LOTE considered low priority & not really relevant to students (not real learning)
- 4) teachers have low opinion because of LOTE due to so many classroom management problems in LOTE classes (which have to be sorted out by year level coordinators and pastoral care teachers)
- 5) our school has quite a low percentage of overseas born or migrant background students, and I think this leads to a fairly insular and "white bread" attitude towards other cultures & languages
- 6) lack of funding for exchange program makes it too costly for interested students to go to Germany

 99 There should be more co-ordination between the primary schools & high schools so that the 6 years at primary school actually count for something - for e.g. an accelerated class

General awareness amongst staff and parents about how difficult LOTE teaching is needs to be raised - it all comes from the teacher, the students have no resources of their own to use - making something relevant that is so far away is very hard!!

Much more support and regular lessons, compulsory up to Year 10!
Consistency in teaching across all year levels, focussing on same things.

✍ 100 The general public needs to be made aware of the benefits of learning languages. Language promotion needs to come from all directions, not just from the language teacher, because we are up against a hugely negative attitude from parents, students and colleagues. The benefits of learning a language need to be advertised to the general public, perhaps in the form of newspaper articles, in school newsletters and meetings, to achieve the latter the principals need to come on board, which means they must be educated.

✍ 101 Universities need to respond to the LOTE needs of their area. There are still too many universities not offering any LOTE courses (even with their education courses) and if they do offer something it is via distance education and difficult.

Universities need to offer a compulsory semester of LOTE study (as part of their education course) so that all teachers have some understanding of how another language is learnt and how they can support it in their classes.

(Contact details supplied)

✍ 102 I do not hold much hope for the Commonwealth and the States to provide sufficient resources to fully implement the National Plan. Much talk about this has been done in the past and nothing good has ever come out of it...from a National level or a State level.

I am also concerned about the amount of principals who think they know best when they do not, make decisions about which LOTE they'll have and won't continue with in their schools. For reasons only known to themselves, principals cause a domino effect when a HS principal cancels a LOTE program (say Japanese); the junior schools then can not see why they should maintain theirs as there is no longer any continuity for their students.

✍ 103 Languages need to be strongly mandated and funded up to year 10. In many European countries two LOTEs are the norm and are given as much time as the native equivalent of English. Properly trained teachers who are given adequate time with a class in a week (Not 0.5 hours) can achieve good outcomes and can inspire and motivate students. Many primary schools in this area treat LOTE as a token gesture and students are then discouraged at secondary level when they have few skills in the language. By year 12 our students are behind the 8 ball as they have missed out on many of the basics.

(Contact details supplied)

✍ 104 I believe teachers of LOTE face a strong cultural barrier in Australian secondary schools...that languages aren't that important, that the rest of the world speaks English, "she'll be right"...an anti-intellectual tradition...for this country to get serious about language learning, there needs to be a major cultural shift where there is more public recognition of the value of learning a second or third language.

✍ 105 Some of the areas in this survey do not apply to our rural school setting as the demographics and cultural diversity of our school community does not register. We are also studying Auslan therefore it does not apply to the Asian vs European languages questions

✍ 106 Universities in Victoria are too far removed from the type of language capability that a teacher requires in schools. The standard at Melb Uni in particular is far too demanding for those who only wish to teach to Year 10 or lower. They are turning prospective teachers away in droves in the language that I teach. We have had 4 or 5 students from my school alone who wanted to further their language studies, but found the course to be excessively difficult, my daughter included. Why not have a separate course for these types of students? This is where we are losing out. Their course is irrelevant and out-of-date for prospective teachers.

I am concerned about the future of languages in our country region. 2 teachers retire next year and myself and most of the others are only 8 years away from retiring ourselves. It is almost impossible to attract foreign language teachers to the country especially young ones. When I go to in-services in the city, the teachers all say "I don't know how you do it" The networks are not as effective for us in the bush and the support is often non-existent.

✍ 107 We are very concerned by a decline of support from the government and funding. In the past funding to schools has been tagged LOTE to ensure that we are able to teach senior classes which have smaller numbers than most other classes. We were told this funding no longer exists and goes into a global budget. This year we have scraped by and have had to combine senior classes and this has been with a lot of parental support and letters to the school council. Next year we will be battling to have any senior classes in German. We were also told that Administration wants to whittle it down to only one language at a school of 1500 students. We need more funding or an allocation of funding so that we can keep languages alive!!!!

✍ 108 I am not a qualified language teacher but I have introduced the children to Indonesian studies which includes a very basic introduction to the Indonesian language. We have no one qualified teacher to teach a language in our school so I have taught myself a very little of the language, using whatever resources I can find

✍ 109 Thank you for the opportunity to think about languages and express my views.
I teach part-time in three Primary schools, 2 full days and 2 half days. Whilst I enjoy my work, I really need a full-time income. It would be great if Primary schools were encouraged to employ LOTE teachers in combination with teaching another area, to increase their involvement in the school, and provide more realistic income levels eg. teach Science to all classes as well, or teach literacy such as Reading Recovery as well.
Best wishes for compiling the results of the survey.
(Contact details supplied)

✍ 110 I would like to see an effort made to raise public awareness of the benefits of learning a second language through the media.

I would also like to see more realistic time allotments being given to second language-learning. We achieve a huge amount in the face of meagre allotments and constant interruption to our programmes. Imagine what we could do if these things were improved!!

✍ 111 1) a multi-proficiency class with first language students and second language beginners results in one group being neglected;
2) Classroom management problems severely hinder the teaching and learning process;
3) Lack of age-appropriate and context-appropriate teaching materials for Chinese;
4) Most PDs are not dealing with actual teaching in the classroom;
5) Not sure how to make students engaged and show them the relevance of learning Chinese
(Contact details supplied)


✍ 112 I feel that there should be PD days for people in positions of leadership to help them understand the benefits of learning another language. Also it would be good if these days were mandated for all of the staff in the school community and funded by the education departments or governing bodies. This would ensure that all know the value and will support the program and the staff teaching LOTE.


There seems to be a lot of ignorance about the value of LOTE even though many people think it is a good idea. However, when it comes to giving the subject the appropriate amount of time so that students have a chance of learning this subject to a proficient level many excuses come out like we can't find the staff so we can't have it or the curriculum is too crowded. Etc. But they don't say that about maths or English!! Could you imagine a school not providing these subjects in a school? If LOTE is a part of the core subjects and it is considered to be important why then is it so easy for it to be dismissed with these flippant comments??

LOTE should be treated equally with all of the core subjects both in primary and secondary schools, perhaps even more so in primary when the window of opportunity for learning is so great and really cannot be achieved by starting at secondary alone.

(Contact details supplied)

 **113** It is the time for all Australian secondary school completers to have a 'second language' remark on their records.
(Contact details supplied)

 **114** I would just like to say that as the LOTE teacher at my school I am not formally qualified but maintain my own studies and contact with the culture and many of the teachers outside the metropolitan area are maintaining the LOTE programs in schools through their own enthusiasm and hard work and often with a feeling of isolation from other curriculum areas. Effective networking with a small group of likeminded teachers and a great leader has helped me to maintain my confidence and to continue to improve my skills.

 **115** I teach Mandarin at (name of school), I believe that I'm a devoted LOTE teacher and have been teaching at the school for ten years. I think that Language teaching in Australia is like a decoration, which is not practical. Each child attends a fifty minutes session per week and they have no text books to take home with. I often get frustrated by not able to see children progress well. I often blame myself, and have tried many different ways in order to improve my teaching, but nothing worked. By the time children come to Grade 6, they often had enough of LOTE, as they don't see themselves picking up the language. I think perhaps we could change the LOTE study to cultural study, as one session per week is not enough to learn any language.

✍ **116** I am working in a school of languages so my answers can be very different to a teacher who is in a normal school. My school is totally committed to provide the teaching of languages but I believe that normal schools teachers have a lot of disadvantages in their schools. I teach language by distance and I think that this is a great way to learn a language and continue teaching as many languages as we have represented in the Australian community. Distance education is an excellent way to have students doing the language of their choice.

I am happy to be contacted: (Contact details supplied)

Thank you for doing this survey as I hope it is going to have an impact on the decision making people.

✍ **117** When teaching French in NSW, I worked to reinvigorate the moribund MLTANSW; when in Victoria, I worked from the MLTAV towards Federation of MLTAs. I have BA (Hons) Dip.Ed. from Melbourne, MA from Monash, Doctorat es Lettres from Neuchatel (Suisse); I have published numerous books both aimed at theory for teachers and as curriculum materials for students and teachers.
(Contact details supplied)

✍ **118** Special needs students should be considered case by case.

✍ **119** Although the 75 minute periods are great for integrated curriculum in the middle years in general, I would prefer LOTE students to have frequent lessons, preferably every day. They need the constant exposure and practice. At the moment, our students get 2 x 75-minute periods per week and they forget their vocab between lessons, especially if they have their lessons on two consecutive days. (LOTE is not a priority in time-tabling, so the two lessons are often on consecutive days and in the afternoon!!!)

Some of our worst 'enemies' are our colleagues who do not value the role of LOTE learning in the development of a thinking, understanding, communicating, and flexible citizen of the world.

Funding to support student exchange travel to the country of the target language is essential in the government schools where parents may decide such trips are not worth spending so much money. I have taught a year in an independent school and every student who goes on exchange returns highly motivated to continue with the LOTE and more proficient. In the government

schools I have taught in I have not been able to get parent interest in overseas trips for their children.

More funding for language assistants would be fantastic. If a school is lucky enough to win a grant for a language assistant, it must elect only one language and then that assistant is shared by two or three schools.

If a student begins a LOTE in Year 7, he/she should be guaranteed to be able to do it at the school in Year 12 if he/she chooses. Schools often do not allow small LOTE classes at senior levels due to the financial stress the rest of the school has to bear. LOTE by distance education instead of in class is not a realistic option as this style does not suit many students.

(Contact details supplied)


 **120** I think there has to be more media coverage explaining to the wider public, our parents and our students about the benefits of learning a language other than English.

Overall there is an arrogance that English is enough in this ever shrinking world but it isn't, as people are travelling a lot more and learning a language provides skills and a wider understanding of how language works in general therefore aiding in literacy!!


I encounter negativity every day from students who get it from their parents and their classroom teachers, non verbal disapproval is powerful and we cannot control it but there needs to be a campaign to educate the public and make them see the importance of languages in this diverse country of ours. My school has over 70% of students from an ESL background, yet still some teachers question the relevance of LOTE?? They put in the usual claim that it interferes with their literacy!! What hope do we LOTE teachers have when our colleagues are making uneducated statements such as these??


PLEASE TAKE ACTION AND MAKE IT WIDELY KNOWN THAT THERE IS A PLACE FOR LANGAUGES OTHER THAN ENGLISH IN AUSTRALIAN SCHOOLS IF WE ARE TO COMPETE WITH WORLD MARKETS, OUR CHILDREN MUST BE PREPARED FOR THE FUTURE AND LANGUAGES WILL UNLOCK THE WORLD FOR THEM AND ENSURE AUSTRALIA'S GROWTH!!

IF THERE IS ANYTHING I CAN DO IN THIS CAMPAIGN I WILL MORE THAN HAPPY. THANKYOU

 **121** The government, universities and educational bodies have difficulty understanding the need for considerable time, resources and money that needs to be spent on Professionally Developing Teachers to teach LOTE. They not only need fluency in the language but also need good teaching practise to prevent the frequent over use of text books and the frequent disengagement

of students especially boys. There is an assumption that short in-country courses of a few months will achieve fluency. On-going PD is needed. Country teachers in particular are at a disadvantage as almost all PD is in the Metropolitan areas and timed extremely inconveniently for country teachers' attendance.

 **122** Funding is hard to get for this area it seems to go to other KLA's rather than LOTE.


 **123** I am the LOTE coordinator at Yarra Glen P. S. We have three committed classroom teachers who have adequate grasp of the Italian language to teach our students. We work well as a team and do offer the students a very good program even though we could benefit from a qualified LOTE teacher. Our aim it to expose and interest our students to basic vocabulary and conversation as well as to increase their cultural awareness.


I believe that there is a very positive attitude towards our LOTE program and our staff is very supportive of what we aim to achieve. We all believe that LOTE is a valuable program for our students.

I am open to any new initiatives, suggestions and materials which may enhance the quality of our program.


Personally more money towards better training of LOTE teachers, as well as more LOTE teachers, and more public awareness of the importance of LOTE in schools would be beneficial.

 **124** Language learning is a vital component of learning for all students. It is vital that it is funded better and that support is offered.

 **125** I believe that my school is such a lovely caring environment for students, and I am very proud all the students in my school. LOTE Department, however, tends not to work as a team. The LOTE department system does not seem to be very well organized compare to the other Department in the school, and it is unfortunate that the important information is always hardly shared to the LOTE Department members. Consequently, it is very unfortunate that heavy work load always falls to particular teachers. I wish if all the teachers work closely together so that we can work as a team to develop students' LOTE skills as well as make their school life more precious one.


 **126** I have considered myself to be the lucky one to teach LOTE at a school which has been very supportive. The issues I have concerned here at


my school mainly are about how to maintain students' interest up to VCE level; make VCE examination fairer to non-back-ground students and to raise the awareness of the importance for teachers to be constantly involved in professional development, include ICT skills.

 **127** I have answered the questions honestly. But if we had appropriate teacher resourcing some of my answers would be different. I do think it is valuable to learn a language at primary school, but ONLY if it is taught by a qualified, interested teacher who has access to the kids at least half an hour every day. Or the classroom teachers are prepared to link all their themes to the LOTE so they effectively reinforce the teachings of the language teacher. I have found that by the time the kids get to high school they hate the language they have learned at primary school. To get those students back to feeling positive about language learning is extremely difficult. I am relieved one of our primary schools has opted out. It gives the kids a better chance at getting through to year 12 if they haven't had a bad experience at primary school. I also believe that it should be compulsory at Year 7 but not Year 8. This makes the year 8 classes more stimulating as you have kids in the class who want to be there. Our school has only 180 students. I manage to attract about a third of the students in year 7 into LOTE every year. That is a pretty good effort, last year half the year 7s continued onto year 8. Everyone is a winner in this situation! And I am more likely to get most of those kids through to VCE if we do it this way.

Ours is small farming community and most parents see no need to study a language and many of them have never been overseas and do not understand the opportunities their children may have by studying a language.

Providing greater access to qualified teachers - via the university network is something that desperately needs to be improved

 **128** I believe quite strongly that every child can benefit from the study of a LOTE; however, often there is not sufficient time given on the timetable. LOTE should have the same time as English (Humanities) because English teachers really no longer teach the fundamentals of language and it is only through the study of a LOTE that students come to understand how language works. This enhances their skills in all other areas too. On the whole, my students love their LOTE (we teach both French and Indonesian) and there is little resistance to taking their study -compulsory to the end of Year 9.

 **129** A whole school approach to language learning is vital to the program's success - in our school, and quite a few others I know of, from the top down there is very positive valuing of language study and also very good liaison

with the language teachers and head of department when queries or issues arise. In some other schools the situation is quite the opposite.

Until language study is seen as part of the compulsory core curriculum it will continue to be undervalued. However, its success also depends on providing well-trained teachers who can relate well to the Australian classroom culture and stimulate their students to enjoy and value language learning. Adequate teacher training plays an important role here, too. This is a particular issue with scripted languages: when taught in a manner that relates to Australian students and their learning styles they can be learnt very successfully, but quite a few native speaker teachers do not succeed because they cannot explain and teach in ways to which Australian students can relate.


Re "special needs" students: I have seen many such students obtain great enjoyment and considerable skill development from language study but specialists, ed. support and non-language staff often have a negative and outmoded view of what language study involves. If something has to go so they can be given extra support, it is usually the language, yet this can be an area where they have at least as much success, if not more (in the early years) as their other studies.


A big problem in language programs is the degree of uninformed but "popular" expectations encountered from some parents, some school administrations and some non-language teaching staff, eg about the time needed to become "fluent", about the reasons for language study. This can severely undermine the language program in a school, eg it can result in a language being offered because it won the "popular" vote, even though another is being delivered more successfully, or in students dropping a language because "you have to do much more work to do well at VCE/HSC than in other subjects".

In Australia the number of languages on offer has meant that few have been adequately resourced, but a reduction would need careful thought to ensure sufficient choice is left. Too often this sort of issue becomes almost purely a numbers game ie those that have the most enrolments "win". More focus on vertical studies which identify which languages also retain more students (apart from those with large cohorts with native speakers) might help to identify languages where the pool of teachers and the resources result in a quality outcome.


For scripted languages (I studied and qualified to teach Japanese as an adult) I think the course content in secondary schools needs a complete re-think. It is impossible for any school student to become literate in eg Chinese or Japanese, yet they spend hours and hours learning to write around 400 characters by HSC level. Since school level study is more about basic communication, the use of romanji, pinyin, etc may enable a greater sense of


achievement as students learn to understand and say more, and acquire a wider vocabulary. For those languages it may be better to save the focus on script writing for tertiary level study.

 **130** Class sizes in the LOTE classroom are a major issue as students require extra assistance and this cannot be sufficiently given if there are large numbers of students in the classroom.

 **131** Our school is always supportive in language teaching and learning. I am very grateful. However, something can be done to make it better with my Chinese teaching. Our students won't start their Chinese learning until they are in Yr 8 while most schools start from Yr 7, which makes obvious difference, particularly in Chinese character writing. It usually takes a lot of time in writing those characters.

(Contact details supplied)

 **132** The learning of languages can be strengthened in schools with parental support. All too often, students choose not to apply themselves to their LOTE because their parents say that it is not as important as Maths or English etc... In the majority of cases, parents who tell me this at parent-teacher interviews are the parents of those children who do not succeed in languages. Students hear what their parents are saying and use it as an excuse not to work. Often students feel that languages are too difficult and they would rather do something that required less time and effort to complete. Students are tending to opt for the easy option rather than challenging themselves to go further in their studies. Fear of failure is a big problem and rather than exposing themselves to this, they decide to give up completely.

 **133** I believe that language programs should be subject to review on a 5 yr rotation. Access to a LOTE consultant should be provided for all schools within these rotations and the staff should be able to have funded CRT days for PD to update their skill according to the program's needs as the LOTE consultant reviews and identifies the needs of their school program.

I am sorry to hear of the struggle the state system schools have in maintaining their LOTE programs with only minute budgets. Money definitely isn't filtering down into the LOTE faculty so the teachers have to make do with intercultural learning that could so easily be provided by people from the LOTE country.

It is hard to engage the middle year students.

✍ 134 I teach in a Jewish school where LOTE - Hebrew is compulsory from prep-Year 10. We have 5 lessons a week (once a day for 40 min). In our junior school LOTE is well respected and we hardly have any cancellation or withdrawals of children from our lessons. However I am overloaded with work and curriculum development. It is hard to do P.D's because there aren't any replacement teachers and sources are limited.

✍ 135 I also teach secondary students LOTE, but most of those students do not see it as necessary and since it is not a compulsory subject I have only 8 students at best.

✍ 136 In Victoria, the MACLOTE committee recommended that schools offer 150 minutes per week, preferably spread out over 5 days of 30 minutes each, and that schools be encouraged to offer content-based courses rather than 'language sampler' courses. In the vast majority of schools, this has not happened. On the whole, most people other than LOTE teachers are unaware of these recommendations.

No review of Victorian LOTE programmes has been carried out, other than for the schools participating in the bilingual project.

Based on conversations with colleagues about comments they deal with from parents, students, classroom teachers and school administrators, there is a general feeling that the introduction of LOTE in P-6 in Victoria has not succeeded in allowing students to develop the 'expected' level of skill after 7 years of language study, however this needs to be established by survey.

The outcomes published in the CSF, CSF II and the new VELS curriculum are based on the assumed allocation of 150 minutes per week. If the students' level of achievement is compared to the number of hours of instruction received rather than their year level, their progress appears more realistically on track.

In addition to the amount of time allocated, it is important to look at the frequency with which lessons occur - 5 short lessons are far more effective than one long one.

Ruyton has introduced a content-based programme from P-6 with an innovative approach to timetabling. Students learn ICT in French. Research on the impact of the programme on attitudes within the school community to LOTE as conducted in 2005.

I would be happy to be contacted regarding any of the issues in this survey. (Contact details supplied)

✍️ **137** I am the Exclusive Liaison to AIM Language Learning. AIM (Accelerative Integrated Method) is a gesture approach to the teaching of Languages and accelerates the acquisition of student fluency by providing students with the vocabulary and Grammar that they need ...as they need it! The students learn their second language as they would their first language...through the ears and produce through the mouths BEFORE moving on the writing and reading.

I teach exclusively in French and my students as young as grade PREP are coming out with natural spontaneous ...correct sentences in French. I also teach students who have learning difficulties and have had positive results. Please call me if you would like to hear more about this AMAZING PROGRAM.

I am working with schools all over Australia, New Zealand and Singapore. (Contact details supplied)

✍️ **138** My "Don't know" answers are because I am fairly new to the school. I have taught in a very low socio-economic area with a high migrant population and those students often grasped the language better than those without another language at home. However, their motivation to learn was poor as was the support from parents, especially from non-migrant parents. In my current school, which is in a very affluent area with a miniscule amount of families with a second language background, students are doing very well but that is more because their work ethic is different to my previous students and their families support their learning and place importance on education, which many parents at my last school did not. The down side at my current school is that students in years 7 & 8 are only given 90 minutes of a LOTE a week, which is way too little, especially when all the constant interruptions are counted.

✍️ **139** I feel very supported and appreciated in my position as Head of LOTE in the Junior School. But this is purely due to my own hard work and endless hours I put in to make this a success. As always, you can not win them all! I have done everything that I can to create a high profile for Language learning at my school.

But promotion needs to come from higher positions. Funding one year and not the next, gaps in new curriculum outlines to leave room for misinterpretations is all working against recognition of the importance of language learning. I am always told that I should promote LOTE. I disagree! Regular advertisements through the media and not from LOTE teachers themselves but from higher authorities would perhaps make the difference. (Contact details supplied)

✍ 140 It is very difficult to promote the relevance of language learning, not only to assist with the learning of English, but also to encourage understanding and tolerance of other cultures in a city which is extremely mono-cultural and conservative.
There needs to be greater promotion of the importance of languages.


✍ 141 Having 2 contact times a week is making language learning difficult for students. Research has shown that students have to revisit vocabulary and grammatical aspects about 6 different times before it can be 'remembered' and readily recalled. Contact twice a week is not helping this learning.

Schools are moving to longer lessons - 70 - 80 minutes. This is not suitable for language learning unless you are doing a project - language students need about 45 minutes lessons and then we can see the students more often in the week. Again LOTE learning just has to put up with it.

Also in a lot of school students are not being advised to continue with their LOTE. They inform me that there is not career path for LOTE unless they are doing an Arts course. As a language teacher I would like to see career teachers more fully informed about the career paths involving LOTE.
(Contact details supplied)


Victorian Principals said


 1 As my school does not offer LOTE it was difficult to respond to questions asking for information about this


 2 Children with specific learning needs or disabilities should have those needs addressed in all classes not just in English classes. Using concrete examples, providing a variety of opportunities for responses, reviewing and scaffolding learning are as relevant in a LOTE class as in any other.


There is nothing inherently exclusive of some learners in the acquisition of any language either a mother tongue or a second language.
It is the responsibility of all teachers to find a way into learning for students whatever the subject.


The principal of the Victorian School for the Deaf - herself profoundly deaf is a strong advocate of LOTE.


 3 Absolute major priority which affects many of the answers above is the supply of language teachers - particularly to rural communities.
I also think many of the answers above reflect the fact that we are in a rural, white Anglo Saxon community and have very limited experience of other cultures.


 4 Funding is provided for some language other than English teaching however when funds are tight and you are trying to run small class sizes language other than English becomes a lower priority for staff. Staff who are trained don't want to take time out of their classroom to teach the other grades.


 5 We are extremely fortunate at our school to have an excellent LOTE teacher who provides a stimulating and relevant Mandarin LOTE program for our students from Prep to Year 6. She also provides for those students with Mandarin as their first language. Her program is very child oriented with focus on oral and hands-on experiences. She has worked with our children for the last 7 years and has developed a positive and effective relationship with the students. Her classes are inclusive, happy and stimulating learning. Discipline issues are rare because she has been an integral part of the school's teaching staff. Her teaching reflects the current initiatives.

 6 Beulah is a small Mallee town with an enrolment of 46 students. Over the next four years this will decrease to under 30 students, as is the trend in other like communities. We have a Japanese person who is a qualified Japanese teacher who travels from a nearby town and we feel extremely lucky to have someone who is this qualified both from a language and cultural point of view. We rate her value to the students very highly and they enjoy her classes. At this stage we can only afford to employ her for 3 hours per week. Unfortunately in the future we go into Bridging finance and we have to cut all staff who are not employed on an ongoing basis - this will included our Japanese teacher and a qualified music teacher that we also employ. We feel as numbers are decreasing that the programs we are offering to students are being denigrated by lack of funding.

 7 The availability of good teaching practitioners as LOTE teachers seems to be very limited, reducing the overall success of the programs. The amount of time that can realistically be allocated to LOTE teaching means children will not really acquire a level of efficiency in speaking the language. The cross cultural aspects covered in LOTE can be managed in stand alone Cultural Studies classes that have the potential to expose children to a broad range of cultures rather than a single culture of the LOTE.

 8 I have a strong personal and professional commitment to the teaching of LOTE in schools, however the resourcing of programs is difficult. We are under resourced and underfinanced. If the government had a real commitment to LOTE then it would provide funds to enable schools to provide full implementation of programs.

 9 Our system funding for LOTE only allows a 45 minute time allocation per week for P-6. If the time available were doubled then the achievement results would be very different.

 10 We have recently started offering Languages (Indonesian) in our VCE program and there is a need to look at the amount of time given to this study in earlier years, especially at Year 10 level. It is, and has been, very difficult over the years to gain Language teachers and up to, say, 5 years ago, it was very much a case of teaching the Language that you had the teacher for.
(Contact details supplied)

✍ 11 First of all, LOTE is not being regarded as an important subject in the whole social climate in Australia. A significant amount of parents do not see the value in regard to improving student literacy and cognitive skills and opening student eyes to see the whole world.

Secondly, learning a LOTE itself help improve student literacy. It also helps students who are from an ethnic background. This has to be recognised by all the educators, the parents and the students.

✍ 12 Our school is committed to Language learning and therefore have established a high quality approach that is part of our school culture


✍ 13 The key issue has been for as long as I can recall one of ignorance and apathy across the whole population. Even though we are a great nation of travellers it's become easier to get by on English only.

Some true national leadership and modelling on this issue would be good eg how many members of the government speak a second language? The setting of an example by the governor-general or PM wouldn't hurt (or for that matter key members of the opposition!). It may also increase our national standing overseas as an educated, well informed member of the international community.

I'd suspect the same issues apply at state government level.

✍ 14 As the Network leader for LOTE I have a keen interest in its delivery throughout our area as well as my own school. I have been successfully organising in country experience for teachers from our target language country for the last 3 years and this will be continuing in 2007. The only handicap to this is the political situation in the world currently where we cannot return the experience - I am speaking of Bali, Indonesia. For languages to succeed we need independent LOTE funding which is based on grant application and kept independent from each school's budget - by this I mean that the grant cannot be absorbed into general staffing, materials etc unrelated to the LOTE. I know it would be a return to the old system of federal government funding, but at least it worked! Many country schools have limited LOTE staff - LOTE is not seen as an attractive position for many teachers because the support for LOTE has dramatically reduced over the last 5 years. This at least seems to be a problem in country Victoria. With the loss of LOTE funding we lost the incentive from school leadership to employ LOTE staff; especially in primary settings. As a LOTE speaking teacher/principal I have a passion for real second language learning for my students and this is what drives my energy to continue.

Cheers
(Contact details supplied)

 **15** The learning of Languages is paramount to a student's overall education as it enables them to gain a global perspective of the world that goes beyond their immediate backyard. The world is a very small place nowadays who knows where they will end up! Let's provide our kids with an opportunity to converse with the world!


 **16** Our school has resourced Japanese classes, projects etc and it is often hard to do this in a small rural school.

Parent support sees that this is an enjoyable program but not necessarily important and could be dropped without anyone being upset.

I feel that the education department no longer support the effort that is put into LOTE and even support languages such as sign language which has a completely different basis for being in the curriculum to replace LOTE.

I hope the children at my school increase in their understanding and tolerance for other nationalities and that the learning of the language (although not nearly enough time) builds a basis for realising that languages are just a way of communication and even if they can say a few words to someone from another country it helps break down barriers.

Sorry had to add this as well as my contact as surveys don't 'say it all'
(Contact details supplied)

 **17** My school has Italian as this is the only language that one of our teachers was able to speak. The availability of qualified stimulating and enthusiastic teachers is very very limited!!


There is no way that my community could sit down and choose what language they think our children most need as the quality of teachers is not available.

We are very prepared to financially resource a high quality program as we believe the learning of another language is very beneficial to most children. We are a very multicultural school - but if a child is interested, stimulated and has an explicitly planned program to enhance on-going learning from the point of knowing - a Language program would be great.


The only children that we would exclude from a languages program would be those that have a severe language disorder - and only when it is obvious that they are not coping in these lessons.

To be honest at this stage we have one of our weakest teachers taking Italian, Prep - 6. The younger children like the classes but the older children hate them as the program and teaching instruction is boring. I would love to have a huge list of teachers to choose from so I could select a highly motivated teacher with excellent teaching practices - one that engages and inspires children.

We also believe that the first 3 years of schooling need to be devoted to the teaching of English as we have many non-English speaking children


 **18** My experience tells me that the quality of instruction - like all areas - is the key to student performance, engagement in, enjoyment of and continued involvement in language study.

The quality of teacher classroom practice determines quality of instruction and is of course dependent upon teacher skills, knowledge and capability. It is imperative that if we are to continue to support this important area of school curriculum, we give the highest priority to teacher training - at tertiary level, and within the school system, so that teachers are exposed to the best practice and highest training. This of course required resource commitment - I don't believe our politicians see it as a priority.

 **19** More schools should be funded to run Bilingual programs.

LOTE funding needs to be increased, so that it can receive the time allocation and priority it deserves. Too many LOTE programs are really cultural programs with a few foreign words thrown in, not true language programs.


A real effort needs to be made to train LOTE teachers.
(Contact details supplied)

 **20** To me language learning is very beneficial to students. This view is shared by the education department but by the community. The government is responsive to the community. Leadership is required to educate the community about the benefits of language learning. Who should provide this leadership? Who can provide this leadership? The principal can - but he/she needs support and genuine commitment from the government - but the government is responsive to the community.


The Australian Government School Community does not place quality education very highly on its agenda.


This is reflected in the state of government schools and the quality of curriculum delivery in government schools. Where are the primary music rooms? Where are the primary music teachers? Where are the primary science rooms? Where are the primary science teachers? If you visit German primary

[schools, or Japanese primary schools - you soon see the difference between Australia community priorities.](#)

 **21** At this school we have a strong and successful language program which uses a mixture of online technology and regular class practise. Class teachers throughout the school also encourage students to study the languages of the students in their class. We have found that the sharing of language in this way encourages a curiosity and pride in LOTE and this has had benefits for student learning in other curriculum areas as well as boosting each child's self esteem and pride in their own culture. A group of staff at this school carried out research on 'multi-lingualism and its effects on literacy learning' whilst on Teacher Professional Leave. Their findings were very positive and supported the teaching programs that we implement at this school.

In regard to students with learning difficulties being expected to learn another language I would like to say that we take each case and each child's needs in isolation. Some children can cope others can't. Therefore I don't believe there is a yes or no answer applicable in this circumstance.

 **22** [Ivanhoe Girls' has a vibrant and exceptionally strong language program that sees a large number of Year 12 students include a LOTE in their studies.](#)
(Contact details supplied)


 **23** Our school has had a 'hit and miss' history with language teaching. We have had several Native speakers of Japanese since 1997, which was a great success. It is however difficult to sustain as we are a tiny community with limited access to homestay accommodation. We also have found huge variation in the skills (inter-personal as well as teaching techniques) between the various people who have come here.


Even though I as Principal have attempted two University courses in Japanese Language Learning, it is difficult to 'train' an existing teacher to a level of proficiency to deliver a program in-house, especially when they teach full time as well.

Options:


1. Travelling teacher services? Within a cluster/network of schools over the course of a week.
2. Intensive holiday-period teacher training
3. Certainly continue the offers to teachers to undertake under-grad language courses.
4. Native Speakers program to continue (I am extending my home to enable me to house my lovely Japanese guests) Maybe some 'Certificate of proficiency' from the Hosting organisation who put them through their initial


training on arrival in Australia. Perhaps some screening back in Japan before contracts are signed. Maybe an over-arching


 24 We have no access to a trained LOTE teacher and the LOTE program at our school has been taken by a teacher who did a 12 week one evening a week course. The program is not satisfactory and we are trying to get funding to implement German from 2007 as we have access to a teacher who is fluent in this language and whose background is German/ Austrian

 25 Through our School Education Board we changed from Italian to Japanese about 3 years ago. Our Japanese teacher teaches Prep to Year 6 once a week and immerses them in the language, culture and creative pursuits. We chose an Asian language because we felt it best met the students needs now and particularly later on. It would be really beneficial if the language taught in primary school was continued in secondary - it's so vital. The only way we can have a language program in our school is through the partial funding that is supplied - we add funds and we have the program.

FUNDING TO SCHOOLS IS VITAL IF WE ARE TO CONTINUE.
Many thanks for the opportunity to respond.

 26 The major issue of concern is always the one of financing Language Learning. Often teachers are not attracted by year to year contracted positions which in itself gives the impression that the subject is not important. However, with the limited funding options schools have, there is little other option.

 27 I don't believe that language teaching is well funded. My school pays for our students to receive one hour per week of language tuition in Japanese. Ideally it should be two hours but we simply can't afford it. In small schools it is very difficult to ensure that LOTE is a priority without locally raised funds. It would be fabulous if the Government could provide LOTE teachers on the old Shared Specialist model for small schools.
(Contact details supplied)

 28 I am very disappointed that the Victorian Education Department withdrew the LOTE factor in our SPRs. We offer three languages up to VCE and this LOTE factor allowed our small classes to get up in our VCE offerings. In 2007 we will not be in a budget position to run a LOTE VCE class for 7 students and this disappoints me greatly. This will be the first time that we will be forced to have our students enrolled in Distance Education.

The other issue that still concerns me is the disadvantage I feel that our girls in Unit 4 have when being assessed. Our girls a 'true' second language girls but are being assessed against a number of students who are not technically 'true' second language students. This then alters the scored assessment and our girls become very despondent. As too, do our very dedicated staff.

✍ 29 The teaching of languages throughout Victoria is little more than a costly joke and a waste of student's time. After 7 years of instruction most schools report on the lowest of benchmarks as so little progress is made. Then the Year 6 students go to a variety of schools and many have to start a new language as their previous one is not taught. Students can be speaking 1 language at home, learning English and then are expected to pick up a third language.


Research indicates that for a language to be well taught 6 hours a week or so is needed. How can we expect a student to pick up another language in 1 lesson a week?

✍ 30 In addition to the financial support provided for the teaching of language through the SRP, DE&T provides support through the provision of language assistants in a number of languages. However, this is not exhaustive. The provision of native speakers in a language such as Indonesian is crucial both to the development of oral language as well as cultural understanding. Unfortunately this language which has extensive teaching across schools in Australia has been left behind in this. I think that it is crucial for the Government to support the teaching of Languages other than English through the provision of native speakers programs across the range of languages offered and not just the select few. I acknowledge that this will require the building of relationships with overseas Governments but it will also demonstrate a strong commitment to the development of cultural ties and understanding amongst various nations throughout our world.

✍ 31 Teaching LOTE to NESB students is a reprehensible waste of time and resources. I would much prefer to spend my scarce resources on providing ESL support for these children. Throughout my teaching and principalship years I have found LOTE teachers to be sub-standard in their application to curriculum delivery, have poor classroom management skills, and are not held to acceptable accountability by the system.


The teaching of LOTE is nothing more than a political stunt and a vague attempt at multiculturalism. Let schools put the resources into helping NESB and ESL students learn English - this will help them far more than some


LOTE subject. Providing students with sound English skills will enhance multiculturalism and racial respect far better than any pathetic attempt at learning a Language Other Than English.

 **32** Languages Other than English can be strengthened with a more general community understanding of their value to improve cultural understandings as well as improve ability in use of native language. When parents have not had a positive second-language learning in their own schooling, it is often difficult to gain full support for the potential benefits for their own children. Hence a national standard is helpful. However, this ought not subject us to a reduction in the availability of access to a large number of LOTE studies. Australia's nationhood is strengthened by our abundance of cultures living within our community. A one-size fits all approach, ie only a few languages will be supported, is tempting at the macro level, but does not allow for the support and positive contribution of so many communities to be both recognised and nurtured.


An introduction to the study of languages other than English ought to be available for all students, regardless of learning ability. This introduction to a new communication framework can open up new understandings about one's own language use, and for students with special learning needs, there can be much benefit. However, as the second language study progresses, there is a need to balance this against the increasing challenge of vocabulary and grammatical understandings required for success and a sense of achievement. There needs to be reasonable options to ensure the cultural understandings are not lost as learning self-esteem is challenged.


Finally, while there are many experiences of LOTE offered in primary education programs, they can remain valid as introductions, as mostly, there is no full immersion into grammar and vocabulary usage. Hence, language in the secondary school builds on a positive interest in language, and moves into a more theoretical basis for richer and more individual communication through a second language. This I see is a reasonable challenge to offer. I do not see the need to ensure a more rigorous link between primary and secondary LOTE studies.


 **33** There are not enough fully trained language teachers, especially in country areas. They have some training but it is not extensive and this affects the quality of the programme delivered.

 **34** I am a native speaker of German and we now teach German in my school (primary) as it is also our Cluster language in the secondary school. Parents in my community do not value the importance of second language


acquisition and I am adamant that it is vital so it goes ahead. Meta-linguistic functioning is used as the key benefit of second language acquisition. It is important for school principals to recognise the importance of 2nd language acquisition. Often parents need to have it clearly articulated why the particular language their children are doing is important. ie. why it is important to learn German and what the long term benefits may be. In Australia, if parents are not from overseas backgrounds, they have a limited idea of the benefits of learning a second language. To develop an understanding of cultural diversity is critical for our students and to see that the rest of the world is not the same as their world is so important.

 35 It is the teacher in front of the class that makes or breaks the program. Teacher training is essential in providing us with teachers who wish to teach and have a true passion for language, culture and the rich heritage in arts and music a language can also offer. In my school we would love such a teacher they are hard to find and never stay long as they are quickly poached for greater salary and job prospects in private schools. We are a school of 191 students and on a limited budget which we spend on teachers who love to be here,

 36 It is extremely difficult to have languages taught in my school as there are very few trained teachers available. In terms of the funds I have at my disposal there is no chance for me to provide language teaching given the budget. I have enough difficulty just providing for a reasonable student/teacher ratio without adding to this problem with a cost associated with a language teacher. This is despite the funding I receive in my budget for LOTE. The reality is that I have a large number of very experienced teachers whose salary costs are high. These costs absorb the LOTE allocation. This means I have very little flexibility given the funds I have available for what is not regarded as a core consideration. Thus LOTE is not well covered in my school. If it was funded appropriately I would be very pleased to ensure it was delivered well.


 37 In the global budget of schools LOTE was a targeted area and schools received money to fund this program. Now it is just part of the 'big bucket' given to schools. This has lessened its importance and forced principals who are ranked on Lit and Numeracy scores to not utilise the money for languages- this is a backward step. This school lost over \$9,000 in implementation adjustments because in the past we had monies we put towards a LOTE teacher. It is impossible for small schools to justify this when all documentation of the school is based around Lit and Numeracy and LOTE drops of the priority list for this reason.

Many teachers do not believe in the importance of LOTE because of the accountability focus of the present government- sadly.

 **38** Continuity of language from Primary to Secondary assists students to build their skills, however maintaining trained staff in small rural communities is difficult.

If a school loses its LOTE teacher it will consider taking on another language if a teacher is available - this adds to the difficulties of students, but is still preferable to no language at all.

Introducing an Asian language is more challenging. We have Chinese students at our school and this has assisted us in talking about Chinese but where choice is offered families are more likely to choose a European language than Chinese.

 **39** Ours is a large co-educational catholic school born from the amalgamation of 3 former smaller schools. We are located on two campuses in a working class area of Melbourne with a very high NESB number of students across 40+ nationalities. When the college started in 1995 languages had an extremely poor profile amongst staff, parents and students. Now in our 11th year, and after the introduction of many initiatives we are proud of the high profile languages enjoy not to mention the exceptional student take up rate after year 10 in the three languages we offer at VCE.

I would be happy to be contacted about our initiatives and programs.

(Contact details supplied)

Victorian Language Advisors said

✍ 1 Please note that Korean is not a Character-based language as quoted in question 267 but is categorised as within the Roman Languages category.

✍ 2 In a devolved system such as Victoria's government school system, the quality and effectiveness of language learning depends on the capacity and willingness of principals and teaching staff to understand and value such learning.

In my experience, principals and non LOTE teaching staff pay scant regard to the value of language learning and 'do it because they have to'.

Too many Principals show a disturbing and embarrassing lack of understanding of languages, of the language learning process and value of the learning of a second language for broader cognitive development.

I work in a region where 134 schools are 'required' to offer a LOTE program to their students. Only 96 of them do, and in most cases these existing programs are inadequately resourced in terms of time devoted to the program...either across a week or over the years of schooling. Only 12 schools offer a program in line with the state recommendations for language programs.

The education department provides specific funding for languages to the 38 schools which do not offer a LOTE program. Principals are accepting the funds and actively choosing to deny their students the opportunity to learn a language. The department chooses not to sanction these principals or to withdraw the funding so the rort continues. This needs to stop.

Other ways of improving the situation

Principals and teachers need languages learning as part of their own educational backgrounds. A small amount of Language learning should be included as a compulsory unit in all teacher education courses/or exemptions given for Year 12 study. The process of language learning needs also to be understood.


Language learning programs must be for more than 30 minutes per week. Mandate 90 minutes at least to allow for effective input of new language, practice of language skills, reflection on language structures and recycling of old language to embed.

The employment conditions for languages teachers in primary schools need to be improved.

Teaching conditions for LOTE teachers need to be considered and addressed seriously. Part-time work and under employment, working across multiple schools, insecurity of employment on a yearly basis, lack of collegiality and professional support, vilification and harassment within the workplace, workload and additional responsibility, limited capacity to be immersed in the language post qualification, personal and professional isolation of working in language poor environments (schools, rural towns and communities, impoverished communities).


Not all LOTE teachers are effective teachers. While structures and school environments are often unhelpful, targeted professional learning and support to improve language learning pedagogy is required.

Improve school leadership capacity. The prevalent managerial model of principalship, largely male-dominated and resource, facility and outcome focussed is not helpful. A more future focussed, educational visionary model is needed.

 **3** I would suggest that School Principals need to understand the value of language learning. They also must realise that LOTE is identified core curriculum, not an elective. It would be wonderful if it was mandated.

The final question says, "Are you satisfied with the quality of Languages Education?" In schools where the program is well provided for, e.g. qualified teacher and adequate time allocation for lessons, the answer would be "yes". But in schools where the administration has opted not to teach languages, the answer is "no".

I am willing to be contacted. But I request that my survey details be kept confidential.
(Contact details supplied)

 **4** Languages in schools can be strengthened by better promotion of the benefits and urgency of learning LOTE at all levels (national, state and school levels). LOTE learning is difficult, perhaps more difficult than other subjects, so the need for support is greater. Support of students who show the social courage to continue with LOTE needs to increase. Many LOTE teachers work on their own in schools, as the only LOTE teacher in their schools. For them, the establishment of networks and useful PD would benefit. LOTE teachers of a an ESL background tend to require more PD on managing student learning. There are many great policies on LOTE learning but they do not seem to get implemented properly when push comes to shove, because no one is accountable, apparently. There are many brilliant LOTE teachers and there

needs to be greater sharing amongst LOTE teachers - this should be facilitated at regional levels within state education departments.

✍ 5 Many schools, mainly primary schools, in my region do not offer Languages - there are issues associated with this such as teacher supply, especially in remote rural settings, the way in which Languages teachers are employed for short time fractions in a number of schools i.e employment conditions, also the status LOTE has in many schools with only minimal and one point of contact per week despite departmental regulations for increased time and points of contact.

Languages teachers seem to be constantly defending their programs in the light of curriculum change and timetable issues. While the system appears to be responding to educational research outcomes in making decisions about change, what we know from research in Languages education has lesser priority and is frequently disregarded by decision makers.

Learning a Language is not sufficiently valued by our communities. We still only talk about one Language (not Languages) and this is not taught effectively. The creation of global citizens who can effectively engage with the global world our children are growing into cannot be maximised when we look at the way languages education is currently structured and being provided in this country. I look toward the policies on Languages education in Europe where multilingual skills are the target for effective participation in a global market.


✍ 6 The quality of a language program really depends on the quality of the teacher. The problem stems from a lack of suitably qualified high quality language teachers. Many schools are forced to "make do" just to satisfy the department's requirements. Poor teaching results in a poor student, staff and public perception of the subject area.

How can language teaching be strengthened?

1. Increase the pool of suitably qualified and high quality teachers.
2. Provide additional funding to schools to employ these staff members, not using existing staff.
3. Improve the training facilities in Universities to attract good teachers to undertake language teaching training.

I am happy to discuss this situation further, as I have experience both as a LOTE teacher and also as a Principal.
(Contact details supplied)


Victorian Tertiary Language Teachers said

 **1** The languages curriculum is too vague, and does not provide adequate language-specific guidance to teachers. Curriculum documents are put out without adequate support materials or training being provided. This problem is most serious in primary schools, where there is in effect no curriculum guidance of any worth, especially as teachers do not generally follow a text book. The result is unstructured and poorly informed programs, even in areas where talented teachers are trying their hardest. Teachers generally do not have the time or the expertise to develop curriculum for each school from scratch - but that is what they are required to do. This is hugely inefficient, and results in a few wonderful programs, and many mediocre or even harmful ones. There should be a stronger 'safety-net' curriculum to fall back on, while still providing room for schools to innovate. I am convinced that no one really knows or cares what is being taught in primary schools, and that the transition problems make the problem even worse, as teachers know that whatever they do will be disregarded by high school teachers.

Many of the problems with curriculum stem from the fact that almost all planning, development and support initiatives are targeted broadly at all languages, and there is no infrastructure to support language specific curriculum. The differences between languages are whitewashed away, and many of the bureaucrats in charge of the process do not even understand what they are.

Languages could be strengthened by provision of much stronger and more detailed language specific curriculum and support materials, combined with adequate measures to measure what is actually being achieved. Such support materials need to be designed around the kind of integrated curriculums now enshrined in curriculum documents, but unlikely to be properly implemented under present conditions. Proper transition strategies and the mandating of adequate time for language learning need to be in place.


(Contact details supplied)


 **2** I have been teaching Spanish at tertiary level for the last 22 years. Unfortunately, Spanish hasn't taken off at secondary level, which is a real shame since its pronunciation and grammar are actually easier to learn than French. Learning Spanish is actually fun and as we all know, we humans learn at ease when we are having fun. I also know that there are lots of qualified Spanish teachers who would be able to fill in language positions if the government decides to create them. At tertiary level is a different story because unless you have a PHD, don't bother applying for a university position and if you do have that particular qualification, someone from overseas will get the job.


I think if the government decides to give languages a "push", they should consider Spanish and make its learning compulsory at a secondary level, at

least up to year 9. Asian languages are obviously more important to Australia for its geographical position and for political and economic reasons, but Spanish is spoken by millions of people around the world. It is practically a second language in the United States and one of the official languages of the United Nations, amongst other things.

Asian languages are important but the general belief is that sometimes they put students off because they are difficult to learn. Unless the student has an Asian background, normally an Australian secondary student would choose Italian, French or German over an Asian language.

 **3** I think that in general, Australians think of educating their children for local, not global capacities. They tend to concentrate on Languages who do not have global possibilities, ie, Japanese, Indonesian, Greek, Italian simply because these reflect the local migration waves or the geographical proximity with Australia but in global terms these languages do not necessarily provide any tools to find attractive, ambitious jobs. Spanish, spoken by 430 million people in the world-second USA language, Chinese, should be the most popular languages in High School and, indeed, tertiary education is reflecting this awakening to global reality. Also, I do not think that students nor parents, should decide how the curriculum should be implemented as these matters should be decided by professionals, just as you would not dare tell a doctor how to run his clinic/treatment. They obviously can have an opinion but not to have the absolute power to decide/tell a teacher/lecturer how to run a class. It is this state of constant interfering/complaining that brings the academic standard down, as educators see themselves force to act, not necessarily on pedagogical principles/encourage academic excellence but on the pressure exerted by parents/teachers.

 **4** Languages in Schools and Universities could be considerably strengthened if the schools' careers advisers had a better idea about the importance of languages in an international and global labour market. In my experience, schools' careers advisers, in their most amazing ignorance about career chances with languages are very often the single most important negative factor influencing the choice of languages in schools and tertiary education.

 **5** One of the key problem is teachers training. Teachers' language proficiency as well as their understanding of language learning processes and language pedagogy are quite below what one would expect to produce students with a good level of proficiency. How can we expect for instance the Dip Ed as it presently stands to provide adequate training for future language teachers.

I have the feeling that the majority of language teachers in schools are really struggling with all aspects of their job.

Maybe one solution would be to recruit into the Dip Ed after an Honours year. Or replace the Dip Ed by a 4 semester course such as a Masters, with at least one unit each semester to maintain language proficiency. Issues related to language teaching can be done in the target language.

As language teaching & learning is my area of research I would be happy to be contacted if need be.

(Contact details supplied)

 6 In my view the main issues for languages are as follows:

- appropriately qualified languages teachers: many languages suffer because there is a view that if someone "speaks" a language they are naturally qualified to "teach" that language. This is a mistaken perception. ALL languages teachers should be highly qualified professionals ESPECIALLY primary languages teachers as these are the ones which lay the foundations for students' future success with languages. All too often the primary teachers are not of appropriate quality and provide students with partial and negative learning experiences in languages which leads to disaffection


- resourcing and position in schools: language programs require adequate resourcing and need to be fully integrated into schools. This means changing the perception that languages are an "added extra" and irrelevant. This can be achieved by whole school approaches to language curriculum. Too many teachers forget that ALL curriculum areas can be taught in any language - why not teach maths in Indonesian, or do a unit of work on Australian History in French? Languages are the ONLY curriculum area which span the whole curriculum, why are they relegated to the area of cultural exoticism. This is in some way the fault of languages teachers and also relates to my first point about teacher quality

- integration of languages programs across primary, secondary and tertiary: we need far more articulation and communication across education levels and sectors. This often becomes fragmented due to teacher supply. Governments need to provide a policy framework which encourages cooperation across the years of schooling up to university. Similarly, universities need more internal contact between language departments and teacher training units.

- public face of languages: the current climate of fear and xenophobia promoted by our governments is doing nothing to enhance the position of languages. We need a better campaign which educates all stakeholders in the benefits of languages education. This has to go beyond feel-good statements


to practical, vocational and educational issues. The UK has done some of this work already.

I can be contacted as follows:
(Contact details supplied)

 7 The main problem with language learning is that the time allocation is insufficient for students to make significant progress. This means students become frustrated and bored. The standards set in Victoria for primary schools are based on students receiving about 2.5 hours of language instruction. In reality most programs have about 30mins or 45 mins. Students cannot retain what they learned the previous week and therefore feel they do the same thing every week. The other problem is a lack of set curriculum in the primary sector. each teacher does what they want and many have an attitude that as long as the students are having fun, the program is successful. Teachers need in-country experience to ensure that their language skills are maintained.


In the secondary system the reason many students do not continue to year 12 because the amount of work required to obtain a good result does not compare favourably to other subjects. Students feel they can get a better mark with less work by doing another subject; add that to a society that does not encourage or value language learning or skills and students do not have the motivation to continue studying languages. Students are aware that even when employers ask for an applicant with language skills there is no extra remuneration for having those skills.

(Contact details supplied)

 8 There is little commitment to sound language teacher training in Australian universities. Most courses are well below the recommended 60 hours originally deemed necessary - and that was before mixed proficiency levels and the Internet arrived! Classes are for student teachers of mixed languages, so there is no longer any close training in teaching the specific points of difficulty in the particular language, or the particular cultural factors that are important.

There is little or no supervision of professional practice from universities now, so that links between theory and principles and actual practice are left to the student teacher to make.


In sum, neither the governments nor the universities are willing to put money into basic teacher education.

 9 I think your survey covers all subjects.
We could improve the language teaching with more interest from the parents.

Some times students prefer sport than learning a foreign language...
It is the role of the parents to make sure the child choose a language than
going to choose a sport discipline.
Some students are very good in languages but don't want to pursue after year
10. This is still the role of the parents to insist toward their child, and to get
advice from the teacher where is the best interest for the future of the student.


Appendix 2H – WESTERN AUSTRALIA


Western Australian Parents said


 **1** The biggest hassle with Languages is the inconsistency - every year the children can be learning anew language simply because there is not the availability of staff to ensure that the same language is taught for an adequate length of time. Whilst it may be argued that it is beneficial to be exposed to a number of different languages - constantly changing languages tends to lessen the importance of it. I feel languages are perceived as something that has to be done.

I also wonder about the quality and qualifications of the deliverers of language.

A lot of money and resources have gone in the languages in WA schools and I am not so sure that it has been worth it given the problems showing up in other core curriculum areas.
(Contact details supplied)


 **2** Our school did not have a face to face teacher of languages and thus used the School of Isolated and Distance Education at Leederville in Perth to access languages. Though it was more difficult to have a teacher on-line it was a very experienced teacher and the children had headphones and computer to communicate to their teacher and some supervision was provided by the school. It may have been more effective if the whole class was involved rather than a class out of the room so that the classroom teacher could be up with where the students were up to and what they were doing/discussing and could use the experience as an everyday classroom program rather than something they had nothing to do with.
The students saw it as nothing to do with the classroom teacher and thus not as important.

 **3** I feel that in general, teaching of languages in school, especially primary school is not given enough support and importance. Particularly, I feel that children are not expected to put any effort into the process, e.g. learning of vocab, etc. unlike maths, say, or English, where work not completed in class has to be taken home and done as homework.


 **4** I believe that parents are excluded from many decisions about education. The study of languages is just another example. In my experience


Parents are not given, as standard practice, information about developments in education, curriculum, government policies and priorities in education. Nor are they consulted in any systematic way about any of these matters. Parents have to rely on their own endeavours and research to find such information: whether it be by reading newspapers, on-line research, participation in parent groups such as P & F and APC or some other community or education groups.


This exclusion or non inclusivity is a real problem for education in general. There are a lot of written and verbal representations about parents and teachers working as a team with students, to enhance the students learning experience - but my experience is that this is not a team but an autocratic hierarchy where power is exercised by withholding information and limiting participation.

 5 We have had Japanese offered to our children until this year when our teacher left the position was unable to be filled which seems to be a major problem in country areas. Some incentive needs to be given to specialist teachers to venture outside the metropolitan area.


There needs to be some uniformity with what languages are taught as one school in our area teaches Italian at primary level but when they get to the high school Japanese is the language on offer.

 6 I think learning a language is a good extension for some students, I could see that maybe for others it could be considered difficult or boring. Maybe more schools focusing on and offering fewer languages. I think more exchange programmes and visits to different countries would boost the interest in languages. I would certainly be happy to let my children experience other cultures if the opportunity to visit another country became available for them during their schooling years both primary and high school. In today's world I think it is almost vital that children have the opportunity to learn about other cultures, if only on the hope that it would promote a deeper understanding and peaceful future for all.

 7 Our Head Master needs to be engaged with the students' behaviour and push the language bit more, with some of the students. Plus need to have the student make a choice of the language to learn.

 8 I have 2 primary school children aged 12 and 10 the eldest copes very well academically and the other struggles with some aspects. Japanese is the language taught at our school. My 12 year old recently sat a test for high school extension programs; the extent of her capability in the language test


was that she could write her name in Japanese, after 40 minutes a week for the last 5 years - that was it, her name. I am however sure she could have folded a piece of paper to resemble a frog or an origami fortune teller. In 5 years she has had 1 piece of homework to complete which the instruction on how to get a good mark were very clear, my daughters was hung for all to see at a parent night however was then sent home having never been marked. Too many children struggle with the learning of English and maths these days and fitting in all the other areas of learning and activities at school to spend this much learning time on one language that reaps little at the end is ridiculous. I would prefer to see them do a different country each term learning culture and so forth, similar to the old social studies would be far more beneficial. I have looked at the Education Departments figures on the number of high school students that cease to choose LOTE as a subject once it is not compulsory and I think this is telling you something.


 **9** Whilst all three of my children have enjoyed the language programmes offered by their schools, I as a parent, feel that they have had little to no effectiveness as far as actually learning the language goes. I am sure that, if asked, my 12 year old would be flat out writing more than her own first name in Japanese, or saying "Good Morning and goodbye", after 5 years of study. Yes, she is aware of the cultural difference, however all this could have been covered in one term, if her classroom teacher chose it as a topic.

With the school days so full of everything except the basics, I feel frustrated that I do not have the option to withdraw my struggling 10 year old from Language, to spend time reviewing basic reading, writing and mathematics that he struggles to understand.

I do not believe that learning a second language confuses him, and he enjoys his language classes.

I would like to have the choice of his attending language or getting remedial help.

 **10** I think more time should be devoted to the learning of a language so that the students can understand the country that is the language's origin i.e. learn about its culture, geography, politics etc. Which is what all Australian students should know about Australia as well.


 **11** Language teaching modules could be made available to teachers including audio, visual and kinesthetic experiences. Dedication and passion of the teacher are probably the best motivators for student's language learning.

Where is the question about motivation of parents?

Where is the word fun in this survey?

 **12** I have little knowledge about the National program.


I know that my children have regular LOTE classes at school, however I don't know how the particular language was selected (availability of specialist teaching staff or other?). I do not know how or when it is reviewed and whether the LOTE classes will continue to be offered from year to year. Most of this lack of knowledge could be easily gained by asking the school, but I have not really considered it before. I probably would ask questions if the LOTE classes ceased at any particular time!
(Contact details supplied)


 **13** I have worked at a University for 22 years, learning a second language at the primary level is a complete waste of time.

You would be lucky to average 2 students per school to continue through to High School, and a majority of them are of Italian background, and really should have attended private lessons.

We need to strengthen our English and make language choice. As most countries do all over the world.

Our language teachers are the worst teachers I have ever seen, a friend of mine is a Italian teacher at a Catholic School and has no teaching qualifications, how did that happen???

 **14** I think it almost doesn't matter what other languages are offered. I would not like to underestimate the global utility and growing influence of English and therefore languages that are aligned to English may be preferred. My own opinion is that symbol-based languages are likely to decline, some of them may even die out.

 **15** I think the school language program could be strengthened by offering support classes for parents or some form of cross generational projects in the language. My son is learning Japanese but I learnt German and my husband learnt French at school. We have no grasp of Japanese language, alphabet or culture so find it difficult to feel involved in what he is doing at school. Offering some parent education sessions would be very useful.
(Contact details supplied)

✍ 16 I would prefer my child do more English or maths work as opposed to a language other than the English language. I believe we need to prioritise on their literacy and writing skills. A language should be an option for children. From my experience and what I see as a parent in a year 3 classroom, there are so many students (particularly boys) struggling to read and write. This should be the main focus before entering down the track of other languages.

✍ 17 A greater allocation of time and resources is essential to effectively immerse primary school children in learning another language not 40 minutes a week.

✍ 18 I feel learning about other countries entire cultures are more important for our children rather than just the language side of it. Bring back Social Studies as it was called in my years at school. Teach the children about the history, leaders, economy. etc of a different country each year. My son brings home origami every week from Japanese!

✍ 19 The positive - my 8 yo child delights in learning Japanese at our small independent school. It obviously gives her great satisfaction to tell us the new words she has learnt every day.

The negative - my children have changed schools a few times and each school seems to offer a different language, so that my oldest daughter has begun Indonesian, Italian and French without the same continuity available as for other subjects when we have moved.

A final comment - I think it is a fallacy that Asian languages should take precedence over European languages in Australia. The world is a small place and many major languages should be available. I suppose the challenge is to find a way to make a variety of languages available in every school so that there is both choice and continuity.

✍ 20 1. If limited language teacher resources, pooled classes with other local schools


2. Greater use of audiovisual/web based language programs if teachers unavailable


3. Greater access to Dept Ed sponsored "Immersion" days/camps/weekends


4. Pen-pal opportunities for primary school students


5. Recruitment of parents and friends who may speak LOTE to assist as volunteers to aid immersion in classes- many parents or grandparents who otherwise would feel unable to assist in classes may be able to offer a session or more per term to assist

6. Networks/linkages between schools and groups such as Bilingual Families WA to heighten use/practice of LOTE

 **21** I have a 23 year old daughter who is at university studying social work. She was taught Italian from preprimary to year 7 and no language in high school. She can't even count to 10 in Italian now and I would be interested to know what impact learning a language has had on shaping her beliefs and attitudes, would the time resources and money be better spent on s&e and exposure to culture through this avenue of learning. I can't answer that where is the research. Also I now have a 9 year old who struggles in the English learning area and continued failure in understanding Italian doesn't do much for his self esteem. Just my thoughts not really sure if there is a real answer?????

 **22** I believe that it is probably difficult for a child to learn much of a non English language in primary school. I studied a language other than English from year 7 through to year 10, and I remember very little. I also believe that there are too many languages throughout the state school system, and that it would be much more beneficial for our children if they could continue the language that they have been taught at primary school through secondary school. Maybe the education system needs to teach more about different cultures rather than concentrating on learning a language.


 **23** It should be up to the child if they would like to study another language. This ensures that the child studies the language and does not play up. If the child is not coping with the language the child should be able to withdraw.

 **24** I have been considering enrolling my son at the local government primary school (Dunsborough), the only language they offer is Japanese. At the Steiner school he does French and German. This has been my deciding factor about which school he should attend.


Q57


I have been trying to find subjects to study at university, to teach English as a second language (then live overseas - to learn fluent language, intending to

later return to Australia and teach foreign languages.) I have had little success in finding any subjects. There are none on offer at my current university (Edith Cowan, southwest campus.)

 25 My belief is that too much emphasis is placed on learning another language at the expense of more relevant learning. Children should know how to read, write and know their times tables BEFORE even having the opportunity to discover about another learning area. There is no point in knowing hello in Japanese if you cannot complete a form in English or work out a family budget. Lets make educating our kids relevant and worthwhile. Sure - if kids show competency in core subject areas, then learning a language should be offered as a choice, NEVER compulsory! I learnt French and German in school and have not used either beyond my school years, and it was not because they were European languages. It is my belief VERY FEW actually go on to use a second language in their careers and those who do are often in higher end employment, who would have been competent in other core areas, thus may have taken a language as an elective anyway. I think a survey should be carried out on how many have studied language and how many have used that post school years and you will probably find as I have already mentioned.

Many thanks. It would be good to see the results of this survey after it has been completed. If that is possible, please email me on (Contact details supplied)

 26 I would like to see all Students studying more relevant languages such as German and French. I have travelled extensively and if you can speak German, English and French you can communicate with people in all countries. My Children learn Italian and from my experiences unless you travel to Italy you will never use it. I would also like all schools to learn the same languages. If Children change school they have to start learning another language, or if they go to a high school that does a different language they have to start over.

 27 Since junior primary my child has been learning Japanese, he has learning difficulties and possibly finds Japanese easier to grasp than the English Language. His current teacher has encouraged both kinesthetic learning as well as visual and auditory. Like any lessons, it depends on the personality of the teacher and whether they are teaching (languages) as a job, career or vocation.

✍ 28 Living in the rural sector has many disadvantages. Consistency and quality of staff is a constant problem. We have had Italian, French and Indonesian languages taught over the past five years in short bursts. This does not provide any continuity to the students who would like to carry their studies through to high school. None of them have had enough of one language to hold even the most basic conversation which renders the whole program useless except as an awareness that other nations exist. This should be the point of Social Studies not L.O.T.E.

✍ 29 Up to the end of 2005 school year our school had a great language program for children of year 3 and older. Our language teacher transferred at this time (Italian). The education department in WA could not supply us with a replacement teacher for this year and so even though the school wishes to continue with the commitment to language we can only do this with a teacher who is not trained in the language. My son was looking forward to learning Italian this year but has been disappointed at the problems which are out of the school's hands. I fear the language program may be discontinued instead of strengthened.
(Contact details supplied)

✍ 30 Kindly consider offering Chinese (China curriculum) in LOTE at more schools, both in terms of its importance as the language of a global superpower like China, and because there are many parents of Chinese students in schools who would like their kids to learn the language in school. The Chung Wah Association would be one of many resources the government could tap on.

✍ 31 Japanese is the LOTE language at our primary school however not all high schools that we feed into offer Japanese. They all offer Italian and the ancestry of many of the students is Italian. I don't think we have anyone of Japanese descent at our school. So I don't disagree with the LOTE program but with the language our school teaches. I understand children can pick up languages quite easily as a young child so I'm wondering why it isn't offered in pre-primary or year one. In Japan, English starts in Kindy with games and songs.
I think a European language is great because Italian, Spanish and French are quite similar so if you're fluent in one you can easily pick up the other two. English has become a bit of a universal language in business the only thing Japanese is good for is catering to the tourist industry. I would prefer my daughter being able to communicate to her great grandmother and Italian relatives.

✍ 32 I think its important that the Language teacher should first his/her love of the language thru explanation of the country's culture and how language is part of the culture and teach it the fun way. For a child alien to the language, it's stressful enough to not know the language, but to have the language taught as if it is a subject of "must-learn" can be very challenging for the kids or even to get them interested. The language teacher in our school is temperamental and impatient with the kids - can you imagine a kid interested to learn anything new from her?

Language teacher should be taught the culture of that language first to bring out the interest in a child. If I were to teach Japanese, I think I would find ways to dress up with a Japanese kimono for a day just for the fun of it. Instead of yelling at kids.

✍ 33 I have three children who have all achieved very well in languages - however they achieve well in all of their subjects. One has moved from local Government Primary School to Private High School studying Japanese in both. Her teacher was impressed with her knowledge and her language skills when she moved to High School. (Her High School teacher wrote the books used for Japanese Curriculum here). My second child moved from same local Government Primary School to Private High School but had to change language - fortunately they offer beginning language and continuing language. My third child is still in Primary School.

Discipline seems to be the biggest issue in language classes - perhaps it is undervalued as a subject eg "I don't have to do this"

Continuity is an issue when changing schools - it does not seem to be taught at the same level in each school, and different languages are offered. This was not a problem, however, when my child moved from Government Primary to Private High School as he joined a beginners class in the new language.

I have a child who learned Japanese under the tuition of the writer of the book used in the syllabus. Even though she achieved really well, she did not consider it at all for a TER subject.

Personally, in Primary School I feel that students are spending too much time on extra subjects and not enough time on basic learning.


I am willing to be contacted on (Contact details supplied)


 34 Think more emphasis should be put on the literacy and numeracy!!!!!!!!!!!!!!


If children WANT to learn another language then give them the option in High School.


My children have been doing French for 5 years and still can't string together a basic sentence in French. Don't see that they will have any benefit of learning another language.

Far more important things to be taught, eg, how to cope with today's stressful situations, how to budget money. MUCH MORE IMPORTANT IN TODAY'S WORLD THAN FRENCH!!!

 35 I would like to see a choice between an Asian language and a Romantic language in every school. I would also like to see better exploration of indigenous language (area specific) and culture in every school.

 36 The study of a second language is worthwhile but continuity of staffing and behaviour management issues largely owing to a dramatic cultural difference between the teacher and the clientele created a negative perception of language study in our community for many years. A recent change from an Asian based language to Italian has been much more positively received with there being a sizeable Italian community in this farming environment.

 37 My children have learnt Indonesian from year 1. I think it is fantastic as it will improve their employment and travel prospects. However, I was disappointed to hear that the high school we feed into doesn't offer Indonesian. This is a real let down in the Education system and means that in order for it not to be a waste of time, I will have to purchase programmes to teach them Indonesian at home.

 38 LOTE is looked at as one of those things that has to be done because it is mandated by the education department and not as something which could enhance the educational emotional and developmental development of the students. As a parent with children at two different primary schools I think it bears mentioning that boys and girls are treated differently with the girls given a greater expectation of continuing on with LOTE studies, at both state schools I have found this to be the case. I also would like to point out that LOTE is treated in much the same fashion at both schools my children attend and any of my answers to any of the questions could apply to either school.

✍ 39 With the decline of literacy skills of students I feel it would be better to direct the resources for languages to improving the literacy of all lower primary students before introducing another language into the curriculum

✍ 40 I am a bit biased; I studied five modern and classical languages from 7 years of age to TEE age level. My year 12 daughter is taking TEE Japanese (studied Italian Immersion at primary school) Having taken part in two school based exchange visits to Japan, she is eager to study Japanese/commerce at university and later to teach in Japan. However, ongoing language studies are always difficult, as every new Principal, and I have experienced many in 21 years of school aged children, wants to spend education dollars on their own pet projects. I have seen a wonderful teacher and a superb language program destroyed by one Principal several years ago. When one daughter reached high school, the only language course available was one term at beginners' level, her year cohort had studied for 7 years already. The P&C had to initiate a change. Formal language training is not popular with many children, amazing considering the number of students in our school who already speak at least two. A fact neither appreciated nor capitalised on by our educators. Lack of suitably trained staff is a huge problem, with most teachers being native language speakers by birth and trained to teach other subjects. Even in the oral TEE exam held last week, the non Japanese examiner corrected herself several times during the examination.

✍ 41 Fixing the problems? Urgent need to train teachers to teach languages, make them feel appreciated, especially those who assist when permanent staff are absent. Encourage students to realize that everything from a maths formula to botanical terms are another language too. Provide better resources centrally, our Japanese teacher has created her own in response to students requests for more.

✍ 42 The limited time devoted to language study in our school makes it difficult for the students to learn a significant amount. I think it should be integrated more into the school and cross across other subjects.

✍ 43 I feel the offer of Japanese only is restrictive, especially as in High School they go on to study French or German as choices where my children are going. Japanese is also quite difficult for younger children to master and this can turn them off languages in general which is a shame.

✍ 44 I believe that all children should be exposed to at least one other language. During my schooling years, I was fortunate enough to have the compulsory subjects of both Latin and French. These languages were both stimulating and interesting. I also believe that the languages taught should be the most widely used languages in the world, i.e French which is used in so many countries throughout Europe, Canada and many of the island nations. Also perhaps one of the Chinese dialects would also be beneficial.

Given that the English language is the most difficult language to learn due to the sentence structures being different, I think that a child needs to start learning a language when they begin school. By doing this the child can choose other languages on offer as they progress through their school life without too many difficulties.

As for children with special needs. Who is to say they do not have the ability to grasp a different language. Each needs to be assessed as to the degree of their learning difficulties and this can only be done once they are exposed to such experiences. Some of the brightest people the world has seen have had some form of learning difficulties whether they are deaf and are a musical genius or Einstein who could tie a shoe lace. What gives a person the right to refuse another an experience without allowing them to try it.

✍ 46 I have one child in high school who has learnt another language throughout primary and high school and has definitely benefited. I have another child who has an intellectual disability, and his school does Japanese and I strongly feel that to start teaching him the language would be very confusing for him, something else he would struggle with (and further lower his self-esteem). However, I would love him to learn about Japan's or any other country's culture to widen his horizons and outlook and view of the world, etc. But just not the language and have tests, etc.

✍ 47 Once a week and for such a short period is not enough for a child to learn a language in a large class. It is never in the school reports which is disappointing and never talked about by the school or teachers at any parent meeting we have been to. This should be addressed. No curriculum plan brought home. A real shame.


✍ 48 I am concerned with two issues to do with LOTE at schools in WA that are preventing the strengthening of languages overall.

1. The poor behaviour of students who are ONLY doing another language because they "have to", the students intend "dropping" languages at the end of the year or whenever permitted, and therefore appear to believe it is

acceptable to misbehave in language classes to the detriment of students who wish to learn and their own development.


2. Starting languages too young.


From my observations this early start or immersion can prevent them looking forward to trying something "new" at secondary school. The students come into secondary school already disliking the study of languages often because of poor experiences in primary years.

 **49** I am not a teacher but I am a qualified linguist (holding both Australian (NAATI) and British IOL qualifications and have a BA Hons in Modern European Languages). I have practiced in WA as an interpreter and translator.

I have only lived in Australia for three years and have limited knowledge of the primary and secondary education systems here - just the experience that my sons' in Yrs 9 & 11 have had so far (which has been quite different for both of them, despite having attended the same secondary school here in WA). Although I have limited knowledge regarding the teaching of LOTE here, I would be interested in taking part in discussions/working parties in an attempt to strengthen the teaching of LOTE in schools. I feel this is a significant challenge in Australia, as indeed it is in UK, given the prevailing opinion in society at large that learning languages other than English has no place in such an English dominated world. The profile of LOTE teaching needs to be significantly raised by encouraging high quality teachers into the profession and by educating head teachers and parents to appreciate the cultural and intellectual value of language learning as against the sheer practical usefulness of being able to communicate in another language. This is an urgent challenge, which unless addressed seriously in the very near future will be insurmountable and I fear that LOTE teaching will die a gradual death here in Australia.

(Contact details supplied)

 **50** I have a particular interest in this issue as I am both a parent of a child studying Japanese and a tertiary teacher of Indonesian. I believe it is vital for Australians to increase their competence in such languages.


 **51** Students from an English speaking background should not be expected to learn a second language at school, until they are fluent in all areas of speaking, spelling and writing in English. Too many children are being forced to move up each year to the next grade, who can not read and write at the level they need. I have personal experience in this problem, as my son was advanced each year will not being able to spell correctly. By the time he


reached high school, his spelling was at a grade 4 or 5. He was not the only child to be in this position. I know of others older and younger who are in the same situation. Learning a second language was hard for him, which in turn made him not do it. Therefore, from the time he started in primary school till the time he finished in year 9 learning a second language, he did not do the work and refused to learn. In this case, he should have been given the option to do extra English.

(Contact details supplied)

 **52** Our school currently does Italian which in the scheme of things is really of very little use.


They should be exposed to an Asian language as these are our closest neighbours and our kids will have more chance to utilise what they have learned.


 **53** Australians are basically monolingual. We need to continue implementing second language learning in schools. Until a whole generation of students have experienced second language learning programs as a continuous part of the school curriculum we will not change the community perception that monolingualism is the accepted norm.


 **54** My twin daughters both have a diagnosis of high functioning autism and are mainstreamed in primary school. They both have a history of language delay and disability. While their language skills are not as sophisticated as their peers, and they struggle with more complex/abstract language and instructions, overall their English language skills continue to develop, albeit in the uneven profile so typical of children on the spectrum.

Both girls participate in their school's LOTE program - Indonesian - and have done so since Year 1. I believe that participation in this program has enabled them to have a concrete tool (the words of the language being studied) to bridge the gap between understanding their cultural experience and that of people living in "another country" and speaking "another language" - which are quite abstract concepts for children who are so contextually bound. They delight in their acquisition of new Indonesian words and relate it to the extension activities used in the LOTE sessions to explain more about the Indonesian culture. While most of their peers have acquired this knowledge faster and more completely I believe the opportunity to participate has deepened the quality of my children's overall education and awareness of others. While participation in LOTE may not be appropriate for all children with special needs I do not believe that any child's special needs should result in an automatic decision to exclude them from this social and educational

experience - as in all teaching, the real issue is HOW the classes are taught. In fact, the very pragmatic approach taken in LOTE lessons, where all of the information is presented explicitly (ie the child is not left to "fill in" the gaps with presumed prior knowledge as is often the case when children are being taught information, at home/school/general community, in their native language - something that is very difficult for children with ASD and other language learning difficulties to do), the learning tasks and expected outcomes are clearly stated, and information is presented in a carefully scaffolded hierarchy within the context of activities which allow the presented language learning tasks to be experienced in a practical manner - an approach that actually fits the needs of many special needs students. So long as all of the teaching staff is aware of and accommodating of the needs of the individual with learning challenges participation in LOTE can be an island of achievement that can boost the sense of achievement of many children - as I have seen with my own children (they also love being able to do something that their Mum can't - for once!!!).


 55 My background is in Speech Pathology. Having graduated some years ago, the thinking at the time (I'm not sure what it is now) was that parents of children who struggle with learning their first language should not bring their child up as bilingual, instead extra time and effort should be devoted to language work on their first language, in this case English if the child is to be raised in Australia.


 56 I feel that the LOTE classes are more disorganised and less well behaved because most of the LOTE teachers are only there part time, a bit like a relief teacher. If the LOTE teacher were an integral part of the school, or an existing staff member who was qualified to teach LOTE then it could be done as a whole school, imbedded in all areas of learning on a day to day basis.


 57 It may not be possible to have an ideal LOTE program in all schools as not every school has enough students to be allowed a full time LOTE specialist teacher. Also the level of communication between the school and parents will vary widely between the different schools. No school or program can be successful without good communication with the parents.


(Contact details supplied)

Western Australian Students said


 1 I love learning Languages I know four languages and it help me communicate with other international people. I think that the government should make L.O.T.E compulsory for all students. Thank you

 2 Language is very important it helps us communicate and as Australia is multicultural I think that learning a different language is very important as we can make visitors to our country feel comfortable and welcome so that is why I think that learning a language other than English is very important.


 3 I think this survey was a bit hard. My school is good with its language course but could be strengthened.


 4 I think this survey sometimes have very hard decision making questions and most of the time I would put 'don't know'; But those are really good questions.


 5 I think the survey was a bit hard but good.

 6 I think learning a new language other than English would a good opportunity for when you are older.

 7 I like Japanese at my school and we have a great teacher. Thank you

 8 I thing we should just learn the basics because Japanese and other languages are hard

 9 I think that children should be able to choose what language to learn

 10 I think that children can choose what language they want in stead of being forced to learn a language they don't want to learn!

✍ 11 Children should have a choice of the language that they would like to learn because they could get bored or they all ready know the language.

✍ 12 I think that learning a different language will be good in the long term but I don't like learning Japanese because is pretty boring. And it makes it worse because I don't really like my teacher for Japanese. I wish that I could learn a different language because I don't really like Japanese. All my friends wish that we could do funner things in Japanese as well.

✍ 13 I don't think students should have language because it is extremely boring and many have described it as "gay"

✍ 14 I don't think students should have language classes because there a waste of time & there extremely boring


✍ 15 I would like to learn a different language other than the one I'm learning at the moment (Japanese) I would like to learn Swiss/German so I could talk to my dad in it and he wouldn't have to teach me and I would be much more involved than what I am with Japanese.

✍ 16 I think that my language at my school gets boring but it does help you if you go to different countries. But the teacher gets mad but 25% it sometimes gets fun but most of the time is doesn't. She is 50% boring and 50% good.

✍ 17 I reckon I would enjoy learning Japanese more if our teacher wasn't so angry all the time. She gets SO angry at the slightest things. I don't think anybody in the WHOLE school that really likes our Japanese teacher.


✍ 18 I think that everybody shod have a chance to learn a different language because it is fun and will help you in life.

✍ 19 Well I think it is good learning a language I do not no because it gives more confidence in life because you feel a lot better that you no another language because if I meet someone who speaks the language that I learnt when I was little


 20 After just moving to high-school, after learning Indonesian in primary school (and Italian at the school before that), I have begun French. Our official teacher believes that because our class is the best behaved and does better in tests compared to his other classes, our LOTE class is the base of a training program for a student teacher, she is nice and speaks French fluently - but makes mistakes a lot and is not all that confident. I believe that it would be better if our official French teacher were to teach us.


On the positive, our official French teacher makes our classes fun and rewarding. He is always happy to help us when we are struggling and treats us with our own individual needs.


I feel that our principal is not at all involved enough (although she is not really involved in the school at all).

 21 I enjoy learning a different language besides English. My brother wants to be an army officer and thinks learning another language will help him.


 22 I Think the Survey Should Have More Information Included in the Questions.


 23 Our Japanese teacher is very good at bringing Japan to our school for us to experience. Later this year she is organising a Japanese restaurant for the year sevens and a Japanese lunch for the 4's and 5's plus a excursion to the Japanese part of the Perth zoo for the 6's

 24 I think maybe the language program can a bit improved because sometimes it can get boring and there's not much to do because the teacher just speaks the language and it would be better if the teacher actually told us some more words so we understand what the teacher says instead of not knowing what it means.


 25 Well I am Japanese so it's a bit easy for me so I think we should change the subject to maybe about two subjects so we can choose from the two.


 26 I don't like learning other languages at all

 27 French is very fun, and my teacher is very helpful, but sometimes memorising vocabulary becomes difficult.

 28 I think that learning a language is hard and I find it very hard to learn it I believe that is language was not taught in schools but out of school students would be able to pay better attention to other subjects .


 29 (Teacher name) is a very nice person. She is going to give me full marks.


 30 I think language is a good subject which is fun but I would prefer maths or English and I think it shouldn't be compulsory.

 31 Language at my school is well taught but two things stick out like sore thumbs.

1. The inability for the school to get replacement teachers who speak that required language.


2. The fact that the school doesn't involve students in the languages program as much as they should.

 32 I think that students should get more one on one experience with their teacher as many students in our class learn at a different rate. The classes are much better when they are smaller our group is lucky because we have a fairly small class. Most students seem to prefer being in a smaller class, because the atmosphere is much nicer and friendlier.


 33 I currently learn year eight German at my school. I chose this subject because I wanted to do a foreign European language and I didn't want to do French. In my time learning German (eight months) I have become much better in German, and English. As my sister says, 'He can practically speak fluent German!'


I think learning another language is a great opportunity and I think too many students pass it by.

Ich mag Deutsch!!!


 42 I think that the teachers have to be more controlled so the students don't get out of hand


 43 I enjoyed learning a different language while I was at primary school and LOTE is alright

 44 I want to have more overseas visitors and more language excursions

 45 I reckon that the Chinese class that we do at our school is all right because we only do LOTE once per week for an hour and I would rather do two half hour sessions because I am not that interested in the Chinese language and rather do Italian classes instead

 46 LOTE class is alright sometimes we get 2 do kool stuff ow!

 47 I think that learning a language other than English is great, its fun and a great satisfaction when learn a new word or phrase. I am going to continue my chosen language in high school and I hope I will be able to be in the transfer program.

 48 I like learning Chinese at my school because I know it will help me in life later.

 49 If parents want their children to learn languages they should do it out of school.


 50 I would like to learn another language because it could be more interesting


 51 I would like to learn a different language because it is more interesting to learn other languages

✍ 52 I enjoy learning languages but I don't really like learning LOTE so im not very good at it, but I try my hardest and usually fail so I get let down, sad and depressed and then I have a nervous break down


✍ 53 I can't really understand what my teacher is doing so I just sit and listen to her.


Western Australian Language Teachers said

 **1** In primary school, parents of the target language speaker should be invited in art lessons, maths lessons or sports lessons. Bilingual teaching from Kindergarten is the best way of teaching language to Australian students.


 **2** I think that the state/federal governments do not promote language learning enough as a way to create acceptance of other cultures. In times such as these where people are very quick to judge others for being 'different', language learning (and thus cultural understanding) is an ideal way to overcome this lack of understanding and empathy for others.

There needs to be more support for language learning (particularly Asian languages) so that we can educate children to be broad minded adults.

 **3** More time in Govt schools should be allocated to language learning to keep in line with private schools and their results. Classes should be able to be streamed after year 8. Year 8s should have compulsory language but after that only the more able 9s and 10s - there is a lot of time wasting and low morale at the moment due to compulsory year 9 and 10 classes with unmotivated students which affects the teachers and better students.

 **4** It's such an uphill battle teaching languages in a boys' school. Unfortunately, owing to the fact that boys seem to gravitate naturally towards the sciences and maths, it's a fact of life that classes are small from Yrs 10-12, when languages become optional. Other issues: the boys perceive that languages are hard. Our university entrance system allows them not to stretch themselves to the full, so languages are not chosen. Parental attitudes can be very supportive, but from time to time there is resistance from home.


I'd be interested in following the debate.
(Contact details supplied)


 **5** I would sincerely like to see compulsory yr 9 and 9 Languages in Catholic Schools - our enquiries in WA Catholic schools indicate that there are very few schools enforcing compulsory languages after yr 8 level.

Making 13 yr old students choose to continue language study when presented with a number of "new/different" option choices presents problems in numbers for Language classes, running the risk of no class in yr 9 offered. By

the time they reach yr 10 or 11, and realise they have made a mistake, it is too late.

Compulsory yr 9 and/or yr 10, allows them to choose other options as well as continuing Language studies.


 **6** Languages and cultural studies are an important part of every student's education. It is important however, to ensure that the necessary infrastructure is in place if languages are to be made compulsory in Australian schools. Students need to have the opportunity to start languages early in their education and to follow through with the same language. It also needs to be viewed as a core subject, with an appropriate time allocation within the school timetable. Currently languages are being taught with only one 30 min lessons per week. This is not sufficient for students to make progress, enjoy success and thus be motivated to continue learning a language. Also, enough language teachers need to be available to make languages compulsory. This has not been the case in West Australian schools, particularly in the secondary levels. As a result, schools frequently change the language that they offer or employ a LOTE teacher who does not necessarily specialise in the language offered.


 **7** I have heard that although study of a LOTE has been made compulsory for students between Yr 3-9, a significant number of schools are getting around this requirement by offering a "cultural LOTE" - style course, where little or no language is taught and the focus is on the target language culture only. This concerns me greatly, as I think that this type of programme is nothing more than a social studies programme. It does not fulfill the LOTE outcomes outlined in the state curriculum (ie speaking, listening, reading, writing etc.)

I am concerned that there is no one enforcing or checking on schools that are doing the wrong thing. I know that my school has not provided the opportunity for students to learn a language until grade 4/5 and has provided a pretty weak explanation to parents for this.


On a positive note, I have a special needs child with intellectual impairment in my Japanese class and he can't get enough of it. He is enjoying it so much (and learning so well) that he suggested to his class teacher that the morning literacy block (1.5 hours per day) be replaced with Japanese lessons. :) I think the benefits to special needs children and children who struggle in English can be very great.


I am willing to be contacted regarded any issues raised in the survey:
(Contact details supplied)

 8 Language learning holds a high profile in my school but only due to the many extra curricula activities which unfortunately need to be 'dangled' in front of students to motivate them to pick up or continue their language study: eg excursions into the community, involvement in national language week activities, holding an Italian week with many out of school activities, Italian film nights, attending language week film festival, participation in a language competition, conducting a 4 week study and cultural trip of Italy with a sister school and then hosting the school at our school for the same time, participating in a 9 week Italian exchange program both hosting and sending, pizza nights, restaurant excursions, gelato days, bocce tournaments, entering language competitions eg multicultural book competition, spaghetti eating competitions, soccer games, 3 day year 12 Italian camp, etc etc. All these activities take a huge amount of organisation and coordination and do unfortunately lead to burn out. Other subject areas don't seem to need so many extras to keep students as they are compulsory subjects. I try as much as possible to publicise our 'extra' activities in school newsletter, local papers, teacher association newsletters etc, in an attempt to lift the profile of languages in our community. However as hard as we try there will always be those including career advisors and deputies who do not recommend that senior students continue the language as it takes such a lot of work and is difficult. Advice which is often wrong but nonetheless given! This makes it very disheartening when so much extra personal unpaid time is devoted by the language teacher!!

 9 One of the major factors is regular daily contact with the language, i.e. equal time as for other Learning Areas, so that students can have a sense of satisfaction from reaching a level which allows them to really use the language in a meaningful way. The other concern I have is the lack of continuity from one year to the next, where students often complain of reviewing the same ground again and again. This de-motivates them. The other issue I have is that some LOTE teachers actually de-value the LOTE they are teaching by doing lip service to LOTE through activities which actually involve very little LOTE at all. Hands-on, student-centred activities are ideal, but only if the target language is being practised and reinforced. I am always trying to adapt the curriculum to suit the needs of the kids, but they and their parents mostly do consider it to be of equal status to other subjects. This disappoints me at times, because I am aware of how much extra effort a LOTE teacher has to put in, and even they often choose something else, because of the choices available to them and the lack of work in many options. I organise numerous extra-curricular LOTE activities but it is exhausting, and not always appreciated.

I have been a full time LOTE teacher for 26 years, and do not think the status of LOTE has really changed. Yes, it is integrated into primary classes, but are they truly committed to making it work? Where are the LOTE relief teachers - why is LOTE often put on hold because the LOTE teacher falls ill?

 **10** I believe that language programs can be strengthened by better communication between lower, middle and upper schools, where common languages are offered. Too often the disruption and the repetition between schools cause students to be disillusioned with their studies. Middle schools need to be more aware of the standards and levels expected of their students in upper school.
(Contact details supplied)


 **11** The only concern I have with teaching a language in my school is that parents in the country tend to be somewhat insular and don't see the need to learn another language when their kids are usually going to return to the farm to work anyway. Unfortunately some attitudes take a whole generation to turn around! The younger parents who have had LOTE in their schools from the time their children started school have been far more accepting and encouraging. These are the parents who have also travelled when they were younger and have a broader view of the world as a global marketplace. There is hope! We language teachers just have to have the courage to hang in there.

 **12 PROBLEMS**

Can't get relief teachers. I am a Deputy. I get my classes interrupted constantly with administrative needs. Because I can't hand over my LOTE to a trained teacher who can handle the children we're getting in another LOTE teacher.

Limited time limited progress the children must wonder at their lack of proficiency in upper primary years. The community would expect the children to learn the language. The outcomes fall well short of community expectation

I use a lot of ICT one lesson a week. The kids especially the boys love it Often it is the LOTE teacher who turns off older boys. They have a very different mindset from someone whose LOTE is often their life.

 **13** Languages are regarded as dispensable, whenever problems arise and are often used as a scapegoat for other ills in the system or schools. Because they are not so visible, as the performing arts the achievements in Languages are often or easily obscured or not celebrated.
(Contact details supplied)

✍ 14 In closing I would like to say that most Australian students do not see the value in learning a language and many of their parents do not either.

Making the learning of a language compulsory for all students creates a lot of stress for the teacher and a lot of angst in the students.

While most students do not like learning a language, they are willing to tolerate being in a languages classroom if they are given work that is fun.

Even where languages are compulsory for all students, there needs to be some exceptions, which should include:

1. Students with low literacy levels
2. Students with special needs
3. Students that exhibit behaviour that is aggressive and confrontational that threatens the safety of staff and students.
4. Students who have just arrived from overseas and have a poor grasp of English.

✍ 15 The National Statement and Plan for Languages Education in Schools 2005-2008 as far as Perth government schools are concerned is a JOKE!!! There are schools in my district, my school being one in particular, that do not have students doing Languages to Year 10! In my school, NOT all Yr 8s do Languages although students are supposed to take Languages. It is not compulsory in Yr 9 and I have a bunch of Yr 10s [a class created because these students have NO WHERE else to go - so most don't want to be there].


The Education Department/Education Office in my state provides WEAK leadership and commitment to Language education programs. The so called Curriculum Officers know about my situation and they have done NOTHING about it at all!!! They are a waste of time. I have given up trying to ask for direction from them and making the school accountable to providing more Languages classes especially Yrs9 and 10. LOTE is one of the 8 learning areas of the Curriculum Framework but what's the point of LOTE being "eighth in name, eighth in delivery and eighth in priority"?

I am considering teaching some other area as I can teach and have taught SOSE, History and Geography.

✍ 16 Language programs could be strengthened by educating parents to start with, to help them realise how valuable it is to learn another language. Teaching staff in general could be educated further as to how beneficial language education is. Special training in intercultural language learning should be put into place, also.

The notion of LOTE as DOTT time is something which should definitely be eliminated.

I also feel that it would be most helpful if teaching time were to be increased. Last but not least, relevant educational authorities etc... should recognise teachers with LOTE qualifications and so on as fully qualified to teach a second language. This would relieve the current shortage of language teachers.


 **17** I think that the languages teacher can be a key person in the school through gaining qualifications and positions in the following areas:


#Linking languages teaching more explicitly to literacy teaching - this would make the languages teacher another literacy specialist within the school.

#Opportunities for ESL qualifications for languages teachers - there is a high degree of transferability of skills but in WA no inexpensive ways to gain a CELTA or TESOL equivalent qualification (eg, ed dept scholarships)

#Aboriginal education, including language programs, provides excellent intercultural learning opportunities for the language teacher and is a "natural fit" for a Level 3 language teacher school role

#Marketing of languages needs to be driven from above but also from grass roots. Languages teachers need some training in public relations and marketing techniques so that the exciting events etc that they take so much time over have a much wider and stronger impact on students, colleagues, parents and wider community. Simple pre and post surveys to all of these stakeholders; use of newsletters and local media; finding human interest "angles" on language and culture learning; etc.

 **18** Generally I am happy with how language learning is going at my school. Unfortunately, learning a second language is often perceived as irrelevant in Australia as Australians tend to think they only require English.

 **19** The final measure of success from the media, political and community perspective for any school and its' curricular offering rests in the performance of students in final exams / assessments. There is an expectation that results in all subjects are achieved to shared levels of achievement and as such results are comparable. This is not the case in Languages where students may have commenced their learning experience at any age between about 8 & 13 but will all be measured against the same internal yardstick as well as the inter-subject barometer. Time allocated to learning a language varies hugely from school to school, sector to sector and state to state to the extent that there is

almost no hope of statistically 'standardising' a result to any degree of reliability. This makes meaningful review and evaluation at any level above the school very difficult if not impossible - unless the crystal ball is very well tuned!!


Languages education needs to be closely linked to the people and society speaking that language - it must not be taught in isolation - and regular exposure to target language speakers and materials is invaluable in grounding the learning experience in the real world, where it has a relevance and authenticity that is not to be found in textbooks.

It is unfortunate that so much of the basic language is traditionally taught around domestic situations as these are 'off-limits' or at least "uncool" to most adolescent males. It is difficult to build foundations in a gender neutral environment to stimulate and retain their interest, whilst girls are generally quite happy to follow this line of learning and transference of knowledge.

Compulsory learning of language has proven to be a huge problem for schools and students - disengaged students, especially once they have selected courses for the following school year usually want to be 'anywhere but here' and this is toxic for those seeking to continue as they are usually grouped together and selections are being brought forward earlier each year. School transfers mid-year also create huge problems where languages are not 100% portable but the compulsion is...a strong student of language A finds themselves at a new school where their language is not available but they have 7 months to go before they can opt-out - dilemma!!

There are many others but I have classes to teach and must go!

We need help to be able to enjoy sharing a fantastic experience with our talented students.


 **20** Better promotion of studies showing benefits of learning a LOTE is needed - especially regarding the positive effects of LOTE learning for special needs students.


Schools need to recognise that language learning is cumulative and requires regular contact and practice, and stop practices that interfere with this, such as running semester programs rather than full year programs, and by ensuring that language classes are not affected any more than any other subject by interruptions to the teaching learning program.

Most language programs are not given the funding or resourcing they need.


Retention of students into upper school LOTE classes will remain poor for as long as students are doing only 4 to 6 subjects a year. Better career counselling will help also, both ensuring that students have realistic post-school

destinations in mind, and that they are aware of the value of LOTE post school - particularly in a now global employment market.

 **21** Languages Education can be strengthened by programs to ensure the availability of qualified teachers, and more high-level support from Education departments to meet the needs of the language teachers. At a school level, Principals need to be supportive of language programs and this needs to be reflected in the timetabling arrangements of the school. Often language teachers feel under-valued due to having limited timetable time for their classes, and languages being seen as an 'elective'. In some schools, students are excluded from choosing other 'elective' subjects if they choose to continue with their language studies. This has had a constant negative impact on the viability of the languages program in my school, beyond the compulsory years.

 **22** As a language teacher I have found that the biggest hurdle to cross was to convince the parents of the benefits their children get from learning a new language. As my school is located in a very Ethnic community this was made even more difficult because parents wanted their children to learn their own native language. By speaking to them and reassuring them that language teaching is not just about being able to converse in another language but helps children understand accept and be aware of the beliefs and cultures of other people.

As a primary school teacher my other major concern is the lack of communication between Primary and High Schools about their language programme. I believe as a primary teacher my main aim is to keep children enthused about learning a new language and preparing them with the basic background knowledge they need to continue it in high school. However over the years I have become very despondent with the number of student that have come back to me saying they are finding it too boring in high school and do not want to continue on with it. I feel that all language teachers should work together to develop a more cohesive language programme. High School Language teachers should also take on board some of the strategies and teaching styles that primary school language teachers use. They need to make their programmes more hands on and less textbook teaching.

 **23** My situation is very different, as I have both continuity and good resources. I have taught in the same area for 15 years and am in total control of the language program in the four schools within the district and therefore for all students between K and Year 10. The rural community here does not value languages and learning about (and accepting as OK, even if different) another culture is not valued and in fact prejudices occur frequently. It is a very monolingual and monocultural society. My continuity comes from me

having been the sole implementer of the program for so long and hopefully my enthusiasm for the LA helps and because of these factors learning a language is at least seen as something that will happen now, and as such is tolerated if not madly supported by all.

Generally, funding is low, teachers are isolated - I need to travel at least an hour or two to find another Language teacher to share ideas and issues or moderate with. There is very little support from Central Office and none from the District, as no-one there has any background in languages. I also believe that until we can convince educators that languages are important, things will not change. Most teachers and principals, I believe, either feel threatened because they have no background in the LA themselves or they themselves do not value the LA or have had bad experiences with it in the past at other sites.

There must be continuity between schools, at least in the same area. It is difficult enough when some students change areas or, as is the case with many of our rural students, go off to a variety of boarding schools which offer a range of languages, but not necessarily what the students have been learning. Also many secondary schools, especially non-government ones do not have a compulsory language program, so parents get the idea that they are not needed just because the schools where they pay exorbitant fees don't have compulsory languages that therefore this must be right (although it is usually because these schools do not have the teaching force to do so or don't value the LA either). Also secondary teachers must be more aware that primary teachers actually really do teach and therefore they must learn not to start with "Hello, my name is" again and bore the students. Also secondary teachers need to learn more flexibility and learn to cope with the variety of levels they will get in their classes, just as primary teachers have to. Teachers and parents also need to realise that languages are not an option that they can drop out of just because "they don't feel like it", any more than students can opt out of maths, English or science, etc. There is little being done in training institutions to get good quality language teachers and in the country it is almost impossible to get teachers - many in our state do their learning via telematics from the School of Isolated and Distance Education based in Perth.

If something could be done to raise the profile of languages within the community (although I suspect this will be a generational thing as languages education establishes itself more). Also there must be more support from the hierarchy in education itself. Too many administrators look upon languages as a necessary evil to satisfy a system and something that won't last, but at the moment simply provides DOTT so can for that reason be sort of tolerated. Maybe we should make all administrators, teachers and education assistants have to complete at least basic units in their schools language, just as they have to complete units about Aboriginal studies and child protection, etc.

✍ 24 I am only teaching at Trinity for one semester. The permanent Italian teacher is on long service leave. I have answered all questions to the best of my knowledge but feel that I am not qualified to make further comments. However, should you wish to contact me regarding any of my responses: (Contact details supplied)

✍ 25 I enjoy teaching students a language and a culture different to theirs. I find that the present system is not very rewarding for the teachers and the students. There needs to be a more rigorous check on the curriculum so that there is some kind of learning continuum from Primary to Secondary school. Too much repetition gets tedious for the students who then lose interest. Language learning needs to be considered as a subject and not an option that students can drop at any stage.

✍ 26 The importance of learning a language is not fostered in the homes of our students. Therefore this runs into the students' point of view. Parents need to be made more aware of the language's values and experience.

✍ 27 I have been teaching German at the same school for three years, ever since I finished university. My school had received extra funding to offer German prior to my arrival, which has now run out. Because of low student numbers the school is now trying to rid itself of the German program, and is doing this by making life as hard as it can for me, so I leave. Last year the administration were prepared to see the school's top year 11 students relocate to other schools, as there were only 4 year 11's who wanted to do German. Even though the year 11 class is run as a split class with the three year 12's I have, still wasn't considered viable. I offered to teach the split class this year during period 0, just so I wouldn't lose my year 11 class. This was granted. From my current year 10 class 5 students wanted to continue with German, bringing up my numbers to 9 for 2007. However, administration successfully managed to whittle down the number of kids wanting to continue with LOTE to 2, citing "timetabling" problems, and German clashing with English and Outdoor Education.


That, in addition to the constant hurdles thrown my way, including the new courses of study demands, vocational and academic students thrown into the same class, students changing from Japanese (the other language) midway through a term, students coming and going during German class for music lessons or drama rehearsals really isn't making my job rewarding. Considering the pathetic wage I receive for all of this, has made me think of teaching overseas, where I will at least receive a marginally better pay packet and pay less tax.


I'm not just complaining, I've thought through all the challenges facing LOTE teaching here in Perth, and have come up with solutions to many, but since I've got to do my yard duty supervision, I don't have the time to list them all. Should you be interested, please call me on
(Contact details supplied)


 **28** The biggest issue facing Indonesian language teachers in WA at the moment are the restrictions in regards to in-country study. Currently, we are not allowed to take students on visits to Indonesia due to 'safety concerns' and that we would be unable to gain travel insurance (this is not the case).

The same also goes for teacher education programmes. The Endeavour Scholarship provides for in-country teacher language study, yet for Indonesian, we are only able to attend 'in-country' 'immersion-style' courses IN AUSTRALIA. It was particularly memorable when the French teachers had just left for Paris (MID RIOTING) and yet we were still unable to visit Indonesia in its totality...

Many schools are organising excursions to Malaysia to compensate. This brings up many issues - should we teach Malay instead of Indonesian?

 **29** There is no continuity between Language programmes from Primary to high school. Many students have to change languages.
Lack of qualified teachers.
No district plan for languages - the language taught depends on who they can get to teach.
No consultation with high school teachers from feeder schools.
Not acknowledged by District Office at all.
No useful PD provided by District Office.
Being in the country we are very isolated and have little access to good PD.

 **30** I know of a Catholic high school in Bunbury where Year 8 students only study a Language for 6 weeks of the year. The language is only offered in Year 9 if a sufficient number of students choose to do it. Principals should not be allowed to set up such an arrangement. Continuity of Language learning is too important for this to occur.

 **31** As a Languages (LOTE) teacher for almost 30 years, in both UK and Australia I have always gained huge job satisfaction when teaching Primary French. Over the years I have seen the raising of the profile, and increased acceptance of LOTE in primary schools. At my current school LOTE has a high profile and is well resourced. However students only have 1 hour LOTE

per week- I feel more time would allow faster language acquisition. Also the DET in WA only provide work fractions to cover LOTE for years 3 to 7 and I have always felt that there should be the opportunity for school communities to choose to begin LOTE earlier.. in years 1 or 2. Time allocation is an issue....as a part time teacher my DOTT time is 1 half hours per week. This is insufficient to cover the myriad of admin tasks that need to be completed.....from running a cost centre to reporting student progress, updating websites etc etc . Luckily I work part time so am able to do a lot of work in my own time....work I feel is essential to provide a vibrant LOTE program....but of course it would be better to have paid time allocated to perform such tasks.

We teach two languages at our school (Italian and Indonesian) in year 8 only. Students choose one language. We get the students for a total of 4 - 5 hours per week for a total max of 5.5 weeks.

That is all the language they study for their entire high school at our school. 5.5 weeks.!!!

In this class we may have students who have studied the language for 7 years and a lot that have never studied that language.

It makes it ALL very interesting.

Due to this situation and with Outcomes coming into WA I have not kept up to date with the National Plan.


As I only have the students for 5.5. weeks, I have found the boys participating REALLY well - I have definitely noticed, as I do a lot of speaking / listening more than writing, the boys get into this, the girls sit back more and they like the reading / writing side and the boys seem to really dislike this side.

(Contact details supplied)

 32 Thanks for putting this survey together.

Let's hope that the benefits will flow onto the grassroots level where it is most relevant and effective.


(Contact details supplied)


 33 Teaching languages other than English should be compulsory at all schools such as primary schools, high schools, TAFE and universities in Australia. Due to majority of Australian academics is mono-lingua, the emphasis of teaching languages other than English seems to be marginalised and neglected. This has set up the precedent for all senior high school students. The other symptom is that most senior high school student reckon, in my view, they could achieve high scores in their Tertiary Entrance Examination if they would take other than foreign language subject by spending save effects and time because LOTE is not compulsory for their TEE.


So let us make LOTE is compulsory and all students at university have to study LOTE. Then teaching languages other than English will be very fruitful. Otherwise, whatever effects you are going to make, it will seem to me, will be futile.

(Contact details supplied)

 34 Strengthen the school programs with money and time. Encourage government to endorse and publicly acknowledge the importance of learning a second language to the Australian public in general.

 35 I think languages should form part of the compulsory programme through to Upper school, vive les langues!!!!

 36 We need more language teachers especially in country areas. There is a huge drain on distance education language teachers as country teachers retire/resign or move away.

 37 I think a specific language room is needed so that the culture can be fully immersing when the students enter the room as opposed to the teacher going to each classroom and trying to engage the students in the language and culture.

 38 I think that the LOTE 200 policy making LOTE compulsory in WA from Y 3 to Y 12, without giving serious consideration to resources, training and curriculum delivery, had disastrous repercussion on students' motivation to study languages.

Regardless of the socio-economical area of the school, the ability to motivate students to study languages relied first on resources.


Schools provide students with musical instruments in music classes, with kitchen in home economics classes, with balls and sporting equipment in Physical education classes but with a white board and a portable CD player in LOTE classes!


Schools maintain small numbers of students in specialist are (art, wood work, music.) but maintain 30 students in LOTE classes.

It is extremely difficult for students of any age to enjoy learning a new subject without any possibility to try it. Would you remain interested and motivated if you were learning how to cook without ever touching any ingredient or ever tasting any of the new learned recipe. Would you enjoy learning to play cricket sitting down at a desk and taking notes?

This is what we ask to students in LOTE classes in public schools. We are expecting them to enjoy and stay motivated in the study of language with the teacher for 30 students and a CD player as their only tool.

Give them access to computers, internet, listening post, individual TV/DVD for viewing activities, music, books, magazines, TV programs, people to have conversation with. Give them the opportunity to have ongoing contact with people speaking foreign languages, through penpals, exchange programs...and our students will love it

 **39** I believe that parents need to support the school in its delivery of all learning areas. One of the bigger problems I have as a language teacher is that some parents think they should not learn languages. This also means the students are indifferent and know that their parents will not care if they do poorly or do not do their work in language classes.


 **40** There is a major issue with the numbers of students studying a LOTE at the senior secondary level. If this problem is not rectified, language learning in Australia will become an elitist subject. Universities and governments need to provide incentives for students to study a LOTE in year 12 by making LOTE:

1. a pre-requisite to enter certain courses at university;
2. a recommended subject for certain courses at university;

Or, universities could provide a LOTE bonus on entrance scores into university for those students who study a LOTE.

In order to enter a European university, the majority of EU nations require students to have studied a LOTE at high school Year 12 level. The Victorian government has implemented a 'bonus for LOTE' scheme for students who study a LOTE at the VCE level.


All states in Australia should do the same.


 **41** I have been teaching European languages since 1987, firstly in primary schools and then in secondary schools. In my experience I have found that students studying a second language are exposed to literacy learning


strategies that they would miss out on if they didn't study a language in my classroom. I have a holistic cross-curricular approach and teach my students a broad range of learning strategies, not just language learning strategies. Unfortunately I find that Australians do not understand the need or value of a second language until they have travelled after they have left school. But by then it is often too late for them to be involved in a language learning program. I have a very multicultural classroom with some migrant students that speak 4 languages. They understand the value of language learning. But the majority of students don't because their parents have not travelled (low socio economic area) and have not fostered or role modelled an appreciation for language learning. It is proven that language learning is good for a child's brain development just as learning music is, but those facts are not widely publicised.

http://www.teresakennedy.com/BRAIN2006_files/frame.htm

Let's not lose the opportunity to learn a second language in our schools in this country; it would be in my opinion, a great tragedy.

 **42** I teach at 7 rural schools by video conference, telematics & on-line. my answers refer to all of my schools in general.

 **43** Our school has one LOTE class which is a Yr 12 TEE Chinese Advanced. All of our students are overseas full fee paying students. Therefore some questions are irrelevant to us and my opinions are limited.

 **44** Languages in schools will only be strengthened when they are compulsory like Maths is. Not all students like Maths nor are all students good at Maths and nor is much of what is done after primary school in Maths, relevant to students' everyday lives. Yet every secondary student has to persevere with Maths even when not achieving any success in their study of the subject. This is the argument that is used against compulsory languages at high school. Students don't need another language or they won't use that language or this language is too hard etc. The world is no longer compartmentalised into English speakers and all the rest; and work may take today's students any where in the world. School should be preparing them better for this new world instead of keeping the blinkers on them. The Australian community and Education System is out of step with the rest of the world on this point. It's about time we caught up.
(Contact details supplied)

✍ 45 I still believe very strongly in the importance of languages education but it is quite evident that language teachers on the whole are fighting a losing battle against negative public perceptions and lack of real governmental support. Although schools are currently obligated to provide some kind of languages education at their schools, conflicts with FTE and the usual timetabling debacles means that LOTE is more often than not relegated to the status of a "mickey mouse subject". I worked very recently at a high school in WA for example, where my Year 8 Japanese programme was gradually reduced to a term long programme based on just one lesson per week!!!

LOTE teacher morale I find is on the whole pretty low and there is not a lot of confidence regarding the future status of languages education or future employment for that matter. So many LOTE positions are now advertised as just a .4/.5 etc load that it makes a mockery of the effort and costs that individuals have gone to in order to become qualified LOTE teachers. References to going to work in the mining industry from LOTE teachers is not uncommon! Morale is further damaged by the almost aggressively anti-languages attitudes coming from parents themselves and aimed squarely at the LOTE teacher on the "front Line". It is hardly surprising that discipline problems are common in LOTE classrooms. Students behave badly with impunity quite often in the knowledge that their parents will back them up all the way. Students in fact regularly boast of this fact.

I don't feel that languages education at primary school is of any particular benefit to students in its current form. Most primary schools offer just a half hour lesson or so per week. These lessons are frequently interrupted due to school activities, carnivals etc which hinders real learning. It also sends a clear message to children that LOTE isn't important as it is so easily cancelled for whatever reason a school may deem fit. By the time these children reach high school they are well and truly "over" languages. Considering the rising literacy and numeracy issues in this country I do NOT have a problem with the idea of introducing languages at high school level only. If the government is SERIOUS about having LOTE at primary schools, then we need to follow the lead of European schools or schools in Canada for example where language classes are held EVERY day and students are afforded the opportunity to make real and legitimate progress in a second language. What is currently on offer at most Australian schools is "piece-meal" and a complete and utter waste of time. I have taught both at primary and high school level so I feel I am able to make comment on this matter.

I am all for "intercultural language learning" but I feel that in the push to support this we have lost sight of one of the important more "academic" aims of LOTE programmes, and that is to be able to actually produce students who can leave high school with an extremely functional and useful grasp of a second language. A student being only able to remember the word "Konnichi

wa" at a student reunion or happens to know a few origami tricks or how to make sushi in 10 easy steps is really not an example of a successful language programme. If we really want students to believe that languages will help them in the future job market, then our programmes and forms of delivery need to become a whole lot more rigorous and academically demanding. "Cultural understandings" and a broader world view are of course are very important, but this should not be the duty solely of LOTE departments around Australia!


So what are the solutions?

Governments Australia wide need to make a united decision on the real future of languages education. If the decision is to support it fully, than more financial resources need to be provided so that school have sufficient FTE to allow for decent language programmes at their schools as well as sufficiently qualified staff to service these programmes.

Languages should be made compulsory for two full years (Years 8 and 9) after which they can become optional. In addition, FTE should be enough to provide extension type classes in the first two years of high school so that students who really want to learn languages are able to do so with the least disruption.

It would be also preferable that schools give students the choice to study between an Asian language and a European language.

All schools around Australia should be legally OBLIGATED to provide the same amounts of learning time devoted to languages eg. Years 8/9: a minimum of two hours per week, preferably three. This way all students are guaranteed a "fair go".

 **46** I believe that language students should study a language for at least four periods a week. I also think that languages should not be placed on the same grid line as elective subjects, i.e. photography.

I feel that students in primary school should study languages for at least 4 periods a week, with the classroom teacher becoming more involved in the language learning and incorporating it into the non-language curriculum.

I feel that students studying a language in upper secondary should not be subject to studying in a mixed Yr 11 and Yr 12 class.

I believe that non-language teachers should be further educated as to the benefits of studying a language, especially those that are involved with counselling students for upper school subject choices.

I believe that Universities may help relaying the benefits of studying a language by introducing some sort of bonus scheme for language students who wish to study at their University.

✍ 47 Language classes should be streamed in years 8,9 and 10. It is counterproductive to have students of vastly different intellect, interest, motivation and parental backing in the same class. Nothing, however, will be done to change this. I have taught languages in many schools in several countries over a career of more than thirty years, and only at the beginning of my teaching career, in the seventies, were the classes streamed and one could make serious progress in learning a language, and this unfortunately was against a background and at a time when the approach was not communicative enough.

✍ 48 Languages education requires better resourcing by the Government and by schools themselves. A dedicated teaching space (ie a classroom) should be provided so that Languages teachers can provide the "print-rich environment", full of cultural items that are necessary for successful, fun Language learning.

We need to run a nationwide advertising campaign (print, radio, television) about the benefits of Language learning. The parents of our current students went through school at a time when Language learning was not compulsory, and it is still seen by them as an "add-on" to the curriculum. We need to explain the many benefits of second language learning.

We need to continue to focus on transition from Primary to Secondary school. Too often, my students come back with comments about having to "repeat" what was learnt in Primary school, because they have been lumped in a class with beginners, completely ignoring their 5 years+ of prior learning. While I understand that timetabling is difficult, the needs of the students should be taken into account.

We also need to look at how Languages are treated for subject selection in lower secondary. Often (in schools where Languages are not compulsory) students must choose between "fun" subjects such as outdoor education, art and cooking, and Languages, which is seen as being more "academic". At some schools, choosing a Language also reduces the number of other options students can choose ie the students see choosing a Language as being a disadvantage because it takes up too much of their "options" time.


✍ 49 I currently teach in a school where Languages Other Than English are valued and treated as a core subject. Student participation rates are growing and there is a positive feeling in the school. It is a delight to hear students speaking to each other in French, during their lunch break for example, as this

demonstrates to me that they enjoy using the newly-acquired language skills even when not required to do so.

As a language teacher I place a great deal of importance on encouraging my students to participate in a range of student exchanges. I have even organised fund-raising activities in the past to make this an option for a greater number of students. Spending time in the target country (in my case the Island of La Réunion or France) is one of the best experiences secondary school education can offer a young person. In addition to developing a much deeper understanding of the target language and culture, the most significant gains are related to their personal growth, e.g. "I now know that I can cope with anything."

Recommendation: Offering the students exchange opportunities should be a priority for all schools with a languages programme, but there should be compensation for the languages staff volunteering to co-ordinate these and accompany the student groups on overseas tours. The majority of students who choose to continue with the study of a language readily agree that it was the 'carrot' of the exchange that encouraged them to continue studying a language.

For any further queries (Contact details supplied)

 **50** One of the biggest problems we face as Language educators is the attitude of communities to learning a second language. Many people still believe that only the most highly intelligent people can learn another language and also that "well, everyone speaks English anyway - or should - so why do we need to?"

Another huge problem, which is in fact a result of past language programs, is the lack of a big enough and well-qualified teaching force. We lack teachers because they have not learned a language themselves. This creates a huge problem with the continuity of programs, especially a problem in country areas. It would seem that many language teachers are married women who are not prepared to go to small rural schools or to do as I do and teach at a number of different schools, resulting in travel of about 160km round trips each day.

In WA this means that many schools in the country either do not have access to a program or that they are totally reliant on delivery from the School of Isolated and Distance Education, who, although they do an incredibly fantastic job, cannot replace the advantage of a face-to-face program, and also are overloaded with schools. I personally now know of at least one small primary school, a district high school and a senior high school within our education district that will be losing their teachers at the end of this year, with very little/no hope of getting a replacement and also of another very big primary school in a large regional centre close to the metropolitan area that has had no language teacher since they lost theirs three years ago. With these

sorts of problems it is almost impossible to convince teachers and administrators in general that languages have value. They simply don't see it as all they see is a nightmare of "have teacher, lose teacher, try to get teacher, use SIDE, get teacher, lose teacher, etc, and when this is combined with their lack of personal good language experience and therefore positive attitude and belief in the value of languages, most simply say that they don't think programs should exist.

This makes it difficult for those of us dedicated to language education to work and convince people of the value and also fight for a share of funding, time, rooms, etc, etc, etc.

Isolation is also a huge problem. I currently teach at four schools and would have to travel a further 100 km at least to find another language teacher with whom to share ideas or moderate. There are few/no courses or networks offered by district offices and even then the numbers, especially in the country are very small and to get enough of one language and a variety of grades taught and experience is difficult. We have no moderation available unless we manage to organise it between ourselves and no access in the country to courses or groups where one can maintain one's own language skills. This is not such a problem for teachers of other learning areas as you can always read and learn and there is plenty usually available on-line, but for those of us where communication is our trade, we need to keep up with actual communication, especially oral and it simply does not exist. This is a problem that is generally overlooked by the Ed Dept since it is just too hard to deal with, however it is a reality. The only times I get to speak Italian to adults is during the school holidays, when I make it a priority to attend at least a day in-service (usually all that is available) or over the telephone - usually on my mobile whilst I drive the kms to my schools.

Although schools are supposed to have language programs from years 3 to 10, many don't, or they are very ad hoc, or non-compulsory, or run in such a way as to give little chance of real success in language learning (eg over one semester or changing languages constantly). If all schools were really provided with something viable it would help.

So, if someone can come up with a plan - yes, it would need finance!! - where teachers could have their skills improved or maintained and where they could get together to share ideas, programs, work, etc - especially in the country - maybe teleconferencing?


Convincing principals and class teachers to actually attempt at least a little of the language would be helpful, too, similar to what has been done with Aboriginal studies where all staff members - not just teachers - had to attend a certain number of hours to learn and improve their knowledge of the subject. There is a huge need for good and inexpensive resources - not just more commercial course books. There is also a huge need for advisory staff. In WA we are fortunate in Italian courtesy of the Italian government and Italo-Australian Welfare and Cultural Centre who offer support to teachers of all sectors.

Attitudinal change takes at least a generation usually, but real and vocal support from the Ed Dept admin, school admin, P & C admin, etc would certainly help.

Then perhaps some of the other nasties such as timetabling issues, poor/no funding, cancelled lesson for other "more important" things, etc would simply disappear.

Here's hoping!! Congratulations for having taken the time, shown the interest and made the effort to run this survey. I trust you will be able to bring some positive outcomes.

 **51** PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE PROVIDE LANGUAGE TEACHERS WITH A CLASSROOM.

 **52** So many language teachers need to make their own resources and this is extremely time consuming, meaning that classroom energy is reduced. Languages as a subject area are often poorly funded in schools, which means that purchasing of basic classroom display resources is out of reach. This, in turn, means that it is difficult to make our classrooms look appealing and give languages a priority in our school.

Parents in a recent survey by our school ranked LOTE as unimportant, because students only study it for two or three years. Students find it difficult to demonstrate outcomes when they only get 50 minutes of LOTE a week, meaning that parents see it as even more irrelevant.

 **53** I do not have a formal qualification in LOTE but have recently refreshed my language skills in Indonesian through an external TAFE course (which was excellent).

I am unwilling to undertake further studies while my appointment is on a yearly contact basis - and last year I was only informed a week before school started that I had the position again. I will more than likely be in the same position next year. The qualifications required to teach LOTE at primary school level are at too

high a level for what is required to teach primary school, and it is often too difficult to maintain the language at a high level due to isolation in country areas.

In WA we have little support from the Education Department at a State level. I have had no communication from this area all year and I believe that there is only one person employed at a State level. Any support I have received has been organised through the District Office and through our area network where teachers organise their own support and professional development. There are NO funds available to run PD's - they are self-funded by the teachers or by the school, if they are supportive. There has been no PD on

levelling even though we now have to report on levelling and again it is only teachers in the local network getting together and supporting each other, that we are able to discuss and work out these issues.


Whilst my school is generally supportive, being only 1 day per week teaching Indonesian is not enough time to be able to effectively involve ICT in lessons and often access to necessary computers and equipment is not available. I have bought my own digital camera this year due to lack of funding in the LOTE budget (it was cut in half this year) and lack of access to classroom cameras and computers to complete tasks successfully. When I have been able to involve programs over the internet they have been very successful, but there is a need for simple short activities to get through a class of students often only having one computer available.

Time constraints also make it difficult to extend language into other areas of the school.


We have set up a sister school through the Adopt-A-School-Bali Association which has been very valuable in making the learning of Indonesian more relevant to students.

Our high school has just introduced French and Italian in conflict with Indonesian this year with no consultation with primary schools, the majority of which teach Asian languages.

Thank you for the opportunity to have a say.

 **54** I feel that parents and students are generally quite negative when it comes to learning another language, some parents don't care when they are rung to discuss negative behaviour dismissing my concern when I tell them that I am a language teacher, saying "what do you s/he never wanted to learn a language anyway?"

Parents and students need to be aware of the positives of learning another language, and that more importantly that it is important to learn things that they don't enjoy and to demonstrate that they can, also. As this is necessary in the work force...

 **55** I LOVE my job as a language teacher in my school. I teach in the Junior School from Pre-primary to Year 6, and am supported by the parents, Junior school staff as well as the Junior School Principal and Headmistress of the College. I am in constant discussions with class teachers to make sure my lessons are relevant and integrated with class inquiries and I also work closely with the music specialist. I use technology to modernise my methods and make my lessons relevant to the 21st Century. At the same time this allows for Sounds to be included to written presentations. Although we create our own resources eg books, flashcards etc technology also allows us to create material for viewing on CD Rom and interactive games that are used at different levels/years. The special needs and extension teachers have also collaborated

with me, to work with groups of students requiring "rewarding" extensions for a term eg Philosophical discussions in French etc ending with a special breakfast at a French bakery for example where French was again spoken throughout the duration of the excursion.

I feel very supported by our Junior School Head for resources that I feel necessary or new language programmes or outings or any material that I feel is essential to stimulate my students.

I feel however that this "growth" in the language programme as well as in the enthusiasm and interest for French has been possible by separating from the Middle/Senior School language programme. I have struggled to change the attitude of other language teachers who feel that language really start "seriously" in Senior School. Their methods have not changed very much from the time I finished my degree many years ago and I feel this is a problem that all language teachers have to rectify. We need to change our methods/materials to keep languages alive! I am disappointed with the little support Primary School language teachers have from their colleagues (I am, myself, qualified as a senior School teacher but changed direction when I realised that we need to start as early as possible to make a difference.

 56 I know that all aspects of the school teaching-learning curriculum are important.

However, it is hard to fit all subjects and requirements into each school week. Hence we have only one lesson per week for LOTE, in years 7, 8 and 9. (Middle School).

The recommendation is for at least two lessons per week (ie. two hours).

My best suggestion would be to extend the school day by one hour, to fit in all the government requirements in - ie. Also for sport and phys. ed., LOTE, Health, etc.

Of course, we would need to employ more teachers?!

Teachers are in short supply too.

We would need to make teaching an 'attractive' occupation.

The requirement for LOTE teachers would need to be promoted LOUD and CLEAR.

If we plan for a longer school day, with compensation for having a bit 'less homework' for students, AND IF it becomes the 'norm' across all schools in Australia, then no student would 'complain' about having school for a bit longer each day, because all students would 'be equal' on this score. (I know that many students travel long distances to/from school each day, as well).


I think that Special Needs Students do benefit from LOTE - in terms of cultural understanding and confidence and fun with language and interaction


with others in a 'strange tongue'. However, they rarely gain much from it 'academically'.


The social-cultural links and interactions are stronger for them.

In some cases/situations, LOTE may be of no specific benefit at all, for particular types of special needs students.

(Contact details supplied)

 57 I feel that language teachers should be provided with professional development that purely focusses on how to engage boys in language learning as it's often quite difficult to engage them.

 58 There is a large gap between government plans/policies and actual practice in schools. Languages teachers continue to feel let down by the system implementation of languages in the curriculum and in many cases by the attitudes of their own colleagues in other learning areas and in many cases principals who have outdated views on second language learning. Universities have contributed to the shortage of language teachers by not ensuring that a good percentage of trainee teachers can study a second language throughout their degree to enable them to be more fluent speakers of the language


 59 I believe that students should be learning foreign languages AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE.

I also believe that in high school languages should be allocated the same amount of time as other core learning areas.


There needs to be a national campaign - radio TV advertisements promoting the benefits of learning languages.

I think that support for language teaching and learning in Australia is a disgrace. I also think it is the design of national leaders to spread racially intolerant attitudes and fear among voters.

We need to commit more resources in particular to Asian languages since we can no longer deny the fact that we are part of the South East Asian region and should be making every effort to get along with our neighbouring countries. Xenophobic attitudes only serve to prevent our country from moving forward.

 60 My school has recently changed the language taught mainly through the Principal's desire to do so. Changed from Asian to European. Parents were not fully involved in the process and my opinion was never asked for. I

have had many parents and colleagues come to me and commend me on the program that I teach, many stating it's the best LOTE program they've ever seen run in a primary school. The principal has never valued the language or the work I do and the results I achieve with the students, I now have to leave the school and can only be placed in temporary positions filling in for other language teachers on leave until a permanent position can be found for me. I believe if languages are to be changed Principals and school communities should be fully involved in the process and these processes followed properly to get the best result for all concerned.

 **61** The kids start well but as time goes on and they still only have limited proficiency they get disillusioned. This starts becoming noticeable in year 6 / 7


It would be impossible though to find the time for all primary schools students to do enough LOTE for them to become fluent

Perhaps we need to look at primary LOTE schools. They will be attractive as they will attract very capable students. Their results and behaviour standards will be a big enticement.

The variation of ability in YR 7 here is huge
This year we have children who have never studied the LOTE arriving with three native speakers
The ones who often get lost are those struggling not over committed boys


There is a worry that a shortage of teachers will lead to the employment of teachers who will alienate a large cohort of the students


This I really worry about in junior high school

 **62** As a LOTE teacher I find myself often have to point out to staff and parents who often feel that learning a second language is difficult for Students at Educational Risk (SAER), that learning a LOTE addresses literacy and gives kids the chance to revisit and consolidate their literacy skills. Furthermore, I find that SAER students often lack opportunities to experience stepping outside their comfort zone and taking risks. Most SAER students have never travelled. LOTE, when delivered in a structured and well supported way (ie with just as much aide support as they would receive in a 'core' area) can be highly successful and extremely satisfying. The problem is often oversized classrooms (20 or more students in a language class can be difficult; 32 in a class is extremely difficult when attempting communication tasks and resourcing ICT's etc).

In my experience, English and LOTE need to work closer together, that planning needs to be cross-curricula and a task/text focus is the way to go.


I could write so much more but I have so much marking to do!
(Contact details supplied)

 **63** Shortage of qualified language teachers is always a problem. This is especially true for Chinese language teachers. We seem to have many people who are proficient in the Chinese language but they may not necessary have the skills to teach within the Australian school system, to Australian students. They may be from China and have only know the education system of China. They tend to find that the methodology they are familiar with is not suitable to schools in Australia. On the other hand, I am a teacher who is very familiar and skilled with teaching in Australian schools but my Chinese language ability is not at expert level or as a first language. I'm sure this is a problem across all different languages.

 **64** Through my experiences as a languages teacher and as a parent, I have noticed the following:


1. There is a strong lack of co-ordination between primary and high school in the languages offered. In my area, 10 P schools offer Indonesian, but none of the high schools. This is due to the difficulty in obtaining strong teachers of Indonesian. The high schools take any strong teacher they can get.
 2. None of my 3 children enjoyed high school languages study. The youngest sees the value in language learning but is put off by the "traditional" text book delivery of the program at his high school.
 3. Despite the compulsory nature of languages to year 9, some high schools are abandoning this.
 4. Within my language teachers` network, many of the high school teachers are struggling to cope with unruly classes and considering whether to continue or find alternative, less stressful employment.
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 **65** Indigenous languages should be taught in all Australian schools

 **66** It is now an acknowledged fact that foreign exchange students understand the structure of the English language better than the average Australian student. How pathetic is that! And what does that say about the teaching of English language in our schools?


It is absolutely useless and a waste of money for governments to state that every child must learn a foreign language unless they know they have the resources, both human and otherwise, to ensure its success.


Learning a foreign language well (ie taught well by good teachers) is both empowering and becoming more necessary in this "global village". Many older travellers find that their schooldays French returns easily if they need it if it has been well taught over a number of years. An immediate rapport is established if a visitor in a foreign country can communicate at least the basic courtesies in the natives' own language. Another well acknowledged fact!

 67 I believe that learning a second language is one of the most beneficial subject in school curriculum. It is important to learn languages other than English to understand other cultures, people from different cultural background as well as job opportunities. The more people study, the wider career choices they have as Australia is a multi cultural society.

Even though, LOTE is one of eight learning areas in curriculum, there are still lots of parents, students and even teachers believe that language can be an elective. When I contact parents about their children's behaviour, they started asking me why they have to learn a language.

I really believe that the department of education should stress more of the importance of learning a second language by making a book or something to explain that.


 68 Studying any language, including English, is fun and should be an integral part of a child's education considering that communication - talking, listening, reading, writing etc - is a fundamental part of life. Therefore, the more we know about other communicators, the less "scary" or "weird" they become and that can't be a bad thing these days. Words are powerful - so it stands to reason that the more you know the stronger you are. Food for thought: why do we keep insisting on just teaching one language at a time?


 69 Many of the problems with teaching languages stem from the fact that nowadays the role of teachers has changed greatly with inclusivity. We now have students in mainstream classes with severe personality disorders and or physical disabilities who can be extremely disruptive. Coupled with the fact that we are often dealing with parents who themselves have huge issues one of which having lack of parenting skills and therefore being unsupportive towards the education system in general.

Other point is the fact that there is a perception that after a certain period of time students should be proficient in the target language they are learning

.The reality is that learning a L.O.T.E. is hard work. It requires motivation, dedication, commitment and support from the student and his family and it certainly takes more than a couple of years to be fluent. Australian Sports, entertainments and day to day gossips has a lot more priority in a students life than learning a L.O.T.E.

Western Australian Principals said


 **1** Much depends on the quality of teacher. High quality language teachers are extremely difficult to find and keep!


 **2** This survey was hard to respond to as we have had interruptions to our language program due to availability of staff. The staffing branch has tried but there just aren't suitably qualified teachers available.


As the parents and staff see it as a highly desirable aspect of the student's learning we are trying a new model next year in an attempt to provide a satisfactory program. This will mean one of the staff taking on the learning of a language and imparting this and the culture of the new language to the students. We are looking at ways to support the teacher and the program. This illustrates the commitment of the staff and the importance that this community of parents place on language learning.

Perhaps the answer lies in pre-service training or the offer of training qualified teachers in this area as happened a number of years ago. I also believe that these teachers are often asked to take on other roles in the school setting and this may deter them from taking up the position.


Special scholarships/incentives could be offered to students in pre-service or to qualified teachers in other areas.
(Contact details supplied)


 **3** The use of ICT in Language teaching is under-exploited. This may improve motivation and commitment.

 **4** The survey above assumes that our school teaches a language. We do not as we have no access to a language teacher. This made the survey questions difficult to answer in some cases. We would love to have a language operate in the school and continue to explore ways to promote how we may be able to achieve this. We are currently discussing running Aboriginal LOTE with community members as an option.

 **5** I teach in a school where all students come from ESL backgrounds. Many have Otitis Media and this interferes with learning both their home language and SAE. Although there have been LOTE programs at the school in the past, parents announced very clearly beginning of 2007 they did not want a LOTE program. They asked the school to focus on SAE. There was clear


indications they believe here at Cosmo that the home language should be taught at home by 'the grandmothers' and in the context of their cultural lifestyle.

 6 We don't have access to a LOTE teacher and therefore are unable to offer any program at this time. Aboriginal parents are not concerned that their children don't learn a language as they say English is hard enough for them.

 7

1. There is insufficient time in the current school day for another subject that is as diverse as LOTE.
2. The subject provides class teachers with prep time and is seen as a mutually exclusive subject to learning.
3. The LOTE staff are either poor classroom managers or dragons who train children rather than nurture their learning.
4. The LOTE staff see themselves as separate and not an integral part of the school programme and this is evidenced by their inability to link their subject with school/class activities and often a symptom of their secondary training.

Points 1 & 4 above are symptoms of the overcrowded school timetable and limited time in the school day. It needs extending from 9-3 to 8-6pm so we can include other important and pedagogically different learning areas. The LOTE programme needs to recognise and offer family specific language learning. This reinforces the family and school link and reduces the negativity to one selected language offering. This could be done if in longer afternoon sessions based on more social learning subjects, language tutors were used like visiting instrumental music teachers.
(Contact details supplied)

 8


1. Continuity of language due to difficulty of attracting and retaining a teacher is a major difficulty, especially as though many schools only need a part time language teacher.
2. In my experience many language teachers have poor classroom management skills
3. The vast majority of parents would prefer not to do a language, hence they don't care if their kids struggle or are misbehaving
4. I don't think we should focus on language proficiency, I can live with a change of language every few years as hopefully then students would get the basics of many different languages.
5. Attracting a language teacher to country locations is near impossible.

 9 Languages study in Australian schools would be strengthened if we actually taught students the formal part of our own language in English

classes. It is difficult to teach a language properly if the students don't understand the mechanics of their own language.


I am currently learning Italian myself at 49 years of age and finding that because I went through high school in the 70s when the rigour and discipline had disappeared from the teaching of English, I sometimes struggle with some concepts and have to ask for terms like "direct and indirect pronoun" to be explained to me!!


This experience has alerted me to what students must experience when they try to study a language in high school, with no formal study of the parts of the English language to speak of.

 **10** I have had experience staffing secondary Language teachers into schools. The most limiting component to the State's strategy of compulsory languages was the shortage of qualified teachers in the languages requested by schools. There was an oversupply of languages such as French and German when schools were requesting Italian and especially Japanese.

This survey does not address the situation where schools with too few students to form a class can still access a language remotely through telematics. This situation has a raft of issues that could be debated.

This survey does not address the alternative Australian language of our Indigenous people - we currently have a 30% aboriginal population in our Year 8 cohort. It is more relevant for our staff to be aware of the Aboriginal English that these students speak at home.


 **11** I am concerned that there appears to be some concern about the number of students completing their secondary education without having a language. Exposure to the language and culture that is foreign to one's home language for even a few years has a great deal of value. We should beware a confusion of quantitative data with qualitative data. While some exposure to high quality language education for all students in their first year of high school seems highly desirable, it should not be regarded as some failure to successfully conduct a language curriculum if only a small percentage of students continue to pursue it to their final year.


 **12** Language teaching at my school is exemplary at the moment because we have an excellent, dedicated teacher. We have had continuity of teacher in a single language for some years now. I have heard that this is not always the case in some schools.


We do have some parents who do not believe the teaching of our chosen language is of value and they tend to have an impact on how their children attend and participate in language lessons.

Our students are all in mainstream classes and they tend to participate well in language classes.

I thoroughly endorse the teaching of languages and believe more effort in terms of teacher training and promotion of language teaching as a career is necessary as we move into a period of teacher shortage across many learning areas.

 **13** The parents and students generally do not value learning a language other than English:-
*they do not see it as enhancing their child's career opportunities.
*for students who are struggling with literacy it is seen as a waste of time.
In addition language teachers if native speakers strike a "different" school culture and find behaviour management of the students a particular problem. Since more than half our referrals to Student Services come from the Languages Learning 'area it will no longer be compulsory for year 10 students in 2007.

 **14** I have found staffing a LOTE subject is very difficult. The teachers have been ineffective and as a result the students hate LOTE time. I can never get a relief teacher in the subject area, so continuity is an issue.

 **15** While I am a strong supporter of students learning a second language, there is great pressure on schools as the list of 'compulsory subjects' increases. Unfortunately, when it is suggested that another subject should be compulsory there is no suggestion of what should be removed from the curriculum offerings.

At secondary level there is pressure on students, especially the more able students, to complete a fairly academic programme which includes a language. Yet many students are upset that they are, therefore, restricted in the number of preferred subjects they are able to select.

Particularly at secondary level, languages classes may be smaller in size and, hence, not financially viable to run. Without additional funds many schools are not able to continue these classes.

✍ 16 This school offers four languages. The fundamental problem is having continuity of quality teachers to build student confidence and maintain forward momentum.

✍ 17 In my school resource allocation across all learning areas is tight, with LOTE being at times under resourced so that we might cover needs in other areas.

✍ 18 It is very difficult to find high quality LOTE teachers. They work in private companies assisting in business where they earn more than at a school or they work in private schools also earning more.

A great number of my parents don't really care about LOTE and that is reflected through their children's attitude towards LOTE.

The financial resourcing is always an issue because we have to find 62% of the salary from our Salary Pool. We also share our LOTE teacher between 2 other schools so she doesn't have a base.


✍ 19 This is another example where schools are mandated to teach LOTE but given virtually no support to run an effective programme.

Although as a Catholic school I have the option of taking funds away from another area e.g. Literacy support, and putting it towards a LOTE teacher there is still the issue of effective teachers who are in short supply.

At the moment we have the 'free' programme from the consulate which is greatly appreciated but again the effectiveness is compromised by staffing issues.

✍ 20 Mandating Languages in schools is all very well for whoever does it, but the reality of obtaining suitably qualified people in country areas, is another scene.


To maintain consistency over the years is difficult when young Language teachers move in and out of country areas with monotonous regularity. Our school provides a Language that is not provided in the secondary school most of our children attend when they leave here. But that is not sufficient reason for us not to expose the children to a Language while they are with us .. a Language that we have been able to maintain now consistently for several years.


 **21** We are a P-12 school and I am Head of Primary. We have 2 campuses with P-12 on each campus and a Principal of the whole school, across both campuses.

There is no box for me!


I would start our LOTE program in Kindy if we had one as I believe the earlier they learn another language, the better.


Students with learning difficulties learn to speak English, so why not another language.

 **22** There is simply not enough hours in the school day to achieve all that is required of schools. If a quality languages teacher is not available then the lessons rapidly become a waste of valuable time and the students begin to equate 'slack' teachers or incompetent teachers with that language. There is a serious lack of funding and quality teachers, this makes the provision of a sound educational program in the Languages Learning Area virtually impossible. Parents can 'expect' a languages program and an incompetent Languages teacher will stress that Languages are now mandated; however the parents will complain long and loud about the waste of their child's time if the principal allows Languages to be offered by a less than effective teacher. Usually their language knowledge is very sound; however, they have no teaching skills and often very few classroom management techniques. Until serious funding is channelled into the development of quality languages teachers the situation will not improve.

 **23** Language teaching is best served by frequent exposure of a shorter duration rather than fewer exposures of a longer duration. It is hard in a middle and senior school to balance this requirement with that of other subjects.


I am of the view that effective language teaching means that the whole school learns together. A specialist teacher can coordinate and facilitate, but the learning needs to be reinforced by other teachers across the school. You almost need to become a bilingual school.

 **24** Our language is delivered from Perth via the telephone and Centra - web based program. Program delivery is for the full year with all students in years 3 - 7 participating. The program delivered is varied and thematic in nature which allows for language to be built on and practised.


 **25** As with all educational endeavours, the delivery of curriculum depends on skilled teaching and adequate resourcing. In this school we have extremely skilful and highly motivated teacher and relief teacher and the

children receive a varied and exciting curriculum which is rich in language and cultural activities. We receive funding from the Italian Government and a small amount of money from the Australian Government which makes the program possible but the calibre of the teaching staff means that a great deal more can be achieved.

Appropriate resourcing for LOTE would be the first step to assisting schools to provide appropriate curriculum.


 **26** I am sure that language programs can be strengthened. To have the LOTE teacher as part of the regular staff, with daily contact with students, and have a program of immersion would benefit all stakeholders. Having all staff members more au fait with the LOTE language would be beneficial for all parties. Engaging parents in the language learning program would help. A budget for resources, for excursions/incursions to support the language program. For an integration of the language studied across the curriculum - a full engagement with an intercultural comparison of differences and similarities could be a contribution to increasing understanding between any cultures and to the establishment of perspectives and ability to shift these would be a contribution to social cohesion also.


Western Australian Language Advisors said


 **1** It would be of benefit if Primary schools could offer the same language as their high school catchment area so there would be some continuity for students.

Also the idea of offering the students a choice of language eg Indonesian or Japanese so that students will continue with their chosen language from Primary school through to High school.


In order for students to have the best possible chance of continuing a language we need to see more money being invested to encourage people to take up the role of a language teacher so that continuity of language teaching can occur. We do not have the physical teacher resources to implement viable programs in some schools.

 **2** The teaching of Languages in schools must be strengthened - and not be seen as an 'option' or for students who are 'clever'. Like the Maths, English, Society and Environment and Science Learning areas, Languages should be given priority, equal instruction time and resourcing - to enable students to effectively learn a second or third language. Teacher education must also be considered - unlike teachers in other learning areas, a 'good' (proficient in English and a second language) Languages teacher is the pivotal element in a successful Languages programme.

 **3** LOTE is an important part of a child's education and should be valued as much as any other part of the curriculum.

 **4** It is very frustrating when a teacher of another subject area has to take language classes as does happen in a few high schools.

Western Australian Tertiary Language Teachers said


 **1** 1 - Prior to working in tertiary education, I have had the opportunity to work both in primary and secondary schools as a teacher assistant and while high school teachers are, for the most, well equipped to teach a language, I have found that very often in primary the teachers are unable to speak, let alone teach, a language.

2 - In secondary schools, I feel that students are 'cocooned' and are NOT prepared to cope with the pressures of tertiary education. More often than not, they have not been taught to think critically and their background knowledge of the chosen language is not quite enough to be able to enjoy the experience.

3 - Therefore, university teachers have to keep teaching a language instead of dealing with critical thinking of literary studies.

4 - Students seem more concerned with the mark(s) they can achieve than the knowledge they can gain.

(Contact details supplied)

 **2** I get the impression that some parents feel learning an Asian language is more "relevant" than learning a European language, however all this went by the board after the terrorist events in Bali. In some areas also, foreign languages are seen as somehow less "relevant" than Mathematics and Sciences to the lives adolescents lead and expect to lead (how?). "Why do my children have to do a language at school when they don't like it?" Why did my generation have to do this or that subject at school when we may well not have "liked" those subjects? Here's that word again, but there's a "feeling" that the present generation is less ethnocentric than earlier ones, and uni students I encounter apparently place more value on being "educated" rather than just trained. They are aware that there are other people in the world, that people in other countries don't do everything the same way as Australians do, and that other nations have different "approaches" to life (cultural, attitudes) from which Australians can profitably and agreeably learn. Many of those who do a European language at uni are actually primarily doing degrees in Economics Law or Commerce (for the very practical purpose of getting a job), so that the language is a sort of "pleasant extra", but we'd like to feel that, over time, it comes to be genuinely meaningful to them. There is a "feeling" (informed or uninformed, I don't know) that having a European language could help the young person obtain a job in the European Union. Aussies are supposed to be pretty good at foreign languages, especially when it comes to

pronunciation etc. so it will be good if more and more of them get the chance to show how well they can do.

✍ 3 It is interesting that this survey places such little emphasis on the area of in-school support for languages and language teachers. This is a critical issue and the fact that it has not been addressed here is a significant flaw in terms of your research design and the development of this survey instrument.

There are very real problems with Languages in schools. A significant issue, however, is that Language teachers are isolated in schools (if there is a department at all it is very small, and in many primary schools the teacher is not in the school full time), and the Languages learning area is marginalised. Language teachers and the Languages learning are victims of power structures in schools. They are also the victims of ignorance. Principals are ignorant about Languages (particularly about their relationship to L1 literacy) and so too are many school communities.

It's time that Language teachers had a 'fair go' and it's time that Languages received the same in-school support that is afforded to Maths etc. Yes there are some truly awful language teachers but there are some truly awful teachers in all learning areas out there in our schools. The dud maths teacher (of which there are many in my experience) can hide within a department, and behind the widely expressed belief that maths is important. The struggling language teacher has nowhere to hide and very little by way of support to help her/him (usually her) develop as a teaching professional.

(Contact details supplied)

Appendix 3

Responses to Draft Languages Report

Written responses received to the Draft Report were received from:

1. Mr Greg Petherick
Chair, MCEETYA Languages Education Working Party
2. Allan Shaw, Chief Executive and Geoff Ryan, National Chair of the
Australian Heads of Independent Schools Association
3. Julie Flynn, R/Manager, Languages, Curriculum K-12 Directorate, NSW
Department of Education and Training
4. Dr Teresa Angelico, A/Chief Executive of the Catholic Education
Commission of Victoria
5. Dianne Peck, A/General Manager, Student Learning Programs Division,
Victorian Department of Education and Training
6. David Bartlett MHA, Minister for Education, Tasmania
7. Canberra-Goulburn Catholic Education Office
8. Mary Karras, Sydney Catholic Education Office
9. Dr Lindy Norris, Senior Lecturer in Education, Murdoch University
10. Professor Michael Clyne AM, School of Languages and Linguistics,
University of Melbourne

These responses are reproduced on the following pages.



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Employment, Training and Youth Affairs**

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Mr Rupert Macgregor
Projects Manager
Australian Council of State School Organisations (ACSSO)
PO Box 323
CURTIN ACT 2605

Dear Mr Macgregor

Thank you for your email of 15 April 2007, attaching the draft discussion paper, "*Attitudes Towards the Study of Languages in Australian Schools: The National Statement and Plan – making a difference or another decade of indifference?*" for consultation. I am providing a response on behalf of the MCEETYA Languages Education Working Party (Working Party).

I must say at the outset that the Working Party was a little surprised at the broad scope of the discussion paper, given that the last correspondence we had with your organisation was in relation to the range and style of the questions to be included in the survey on attitudes on languages education. In particular the Working Party was quite disappointed at the overwhelming negative tone of the paper and that primarily it seemed to represent an attack on the National Statement and Plan and the work of the MCEETYA Languages Education Working Party as well as ignore the political realities of the way schools are governed.

As you are aware, the *National Statement and Plan for Languages Education in Australian Schools 2005-2008* was endorsed by all Ministers of Education in 2005 through the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA). The Statement provides the current rationale for languages education, describing the purpose and nature of languages education and affirming the key role that it can play in the development of intercultural skills. The Plan provides an overarching framework for all jurisdictions to make decisions regarding the six areas of common concern (the Strands).

Specifically, the Plan aims to:

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

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After endorsement of the National Statement and Plan, the MCEETYA Languages Education Working Party (Working Party) was established in May 2005 with the specific role to:

- develop an annual operational plan which prioritises actions from the Plan, according to the available budget;
- reach agreement on processes and structures for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the National Plan;
- provide advice to the Department of Education, Science and Training on its projects of national significance, from those identified in the National Plan; and
- seek additional funding for national projects from other sources.

You accuse the document of being "cautious, even timid document that steps around the periphery of the problem, looking mainly to gather even more information" (page 19). I would like to point out that nine governments agreed to and endorsed the National Plan. It adopted what could realistically be achieved in four years. Information is being gathered because gaps have been identified, not to duplicate existing information. You may not be aware that at the moment, we cannot even accurately report on the number of students studying a language in Australian schools (except for Year 12 data), hence the requirement to collect student participation data to implement and monitor the National Plan is an important step forward.

The Working Party provides regular reports to the Australian Education Systems Officials Committee (AESOC). It also ensures that consultation occurs with key stakeholders including the Australian Federation of Modern Language Teachers Associations (AFMLTA), the peak principals associations, parent associations including ACSSO and the Australian Parents Council (APC), the tertiary sector, the Australian Federation of Ethnic Schools Associations (AFESA), and the Federation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages (FATSIL).

The Working Party is comprised of representatives from the Australian Government, each State and Territory government, the National Catholic Education Commission and the Independent Schools Council of Australia, in keeping with MCEETYA guidelines. The Working Party met for the first time October 2005 and has met six times since then. This is in recognition of the fact that school education is primarily the responsibility of State and Territory governments.

I understand that many of the State and Territory jurisdictions have responded to your draft discussion paper through their own Ministers. The comments in this letter are limited to those recommendations and issues that have explicit reference to the National Plan or the role of the Working Party. Before providing comments on these, I would like to make some general comments. Firstly, I would like to point out that the National Plan is still in the early stages of implementation. The Working Party has only met since 2005 and is dealing with issues in languages education that necessarily have a long-term focus. Secondly, the issues raised in the report are long-standing issues in languages education that the Working Party, and key stakeholders in general, are well aware of. It is precisely because such issues have persisted over a number of years that the National Plan was developed, with identified agreed areas for concern to assist implementation.

.../3

The National Statement and Plan

Recommendation 2 calls for a fully funded National Implementation Plan for Languages Education in Australian Schools 2009-2012 to replace the current Plan on its expiry in 2008. At this point in time, MCEETYA have not commenced discussions on a replacement plan so I am unable to provide specific comments on this proposal. An evaluation of the existing Plan will be undertaken to inform the next steps. Key stakeholders will of course be involved in this process.

I would like to highlight though that the current National Plan, while not fully funded, does have funding support for its implementation through the Australian Government which is providing 5% of its School Languages Programme funds (around \$1.3 million each year) to support national strategic projects which support the implementation of the National Statement and Plan. The remaining 95% of SLP funds are distributed to State and Territory education authorities. Education authorities must provide annual reports to DEST which report on the use of SLP funds against the six strands for action of the National Plan. It is important to note that the actions listed in these strands allow for flexibility for individual jurisdictions to respond according to their local needs and contexts.

Recommendation 2 also recommends that if a fully-funded implementation plan is not produced, then the National Statement should be withdrawn "on the grounds that it provides the Australian community with unrealistic expectations of governments". As mentioned above, the National Statement provides the current rationale for languages education, describing the purpose and nature of languages education and affirming the key role that it can play in the development of intercultural skills. It represents a commitment by Ministers for Education to quality languages education. It does not necessarily reflect the current situation in languages education but is rather a recognition of what the Ministers for Education aspire to. The existence of the National Plan, with the goal to improve the quality of languages education in Australia, is evidence of this. Therefore, we do not believe the National Statement should be withdrawn.

Recommendation 6 states that MCEETYA should prioritise actions in the Plan, "avoiding those pseudo actions where further research is not required". The Working Party was established, with representatives from all jurisdictions, to perform this role. The Working Party has a workplan which prioritises actions. This is also reflected in the advice it provides to DEST on its projects of national significance.

National Projects

The draft discussion paper does not acknowledge the national projects that are currently being implemented to support the National Plan. This is a significant omission as these projects reflect the actions in the National Plan that have been given priority by the Working Party and are also funded activities, being funded by the Australian Government through the School Languages Programme. These projects range from research reports in areas where gaps have been identified, to practical steps to improving the quality of languages education such as professional learning programmes for teachers and school leaders, and the development of promotional materials and teacher resources.

.../4

Recommendation 10, relating to intercultural language learning, points to the need for the concept to be clearly defined and assistance provided to languages teachers. You should be aware of two current projects, funded by DEST, that are addressing this very issue. Intercultural language teaching and learning is a relatively new concept in languages learning, therefore the lack of available resources is to be expected. This is why the Working Party has identified this area as a priority in identifying projects to assist with the implementing the National Plan. While it obviously takes time to develop quality resources, the outcomes of these two projects will be a significant addition to the resources and professional learning available to teachers and schools.

Intercultural Language Teaching and Learning in Practice Project (ILTLP)

\$2 million in funding is being provided through the Australian Government Quality Teacher Programme for the ILTLP project. The key objective of this national professional learning programme is to develop language teachers' knowledge and understanding of intercultural language teaching and learning, with a particular focus on long-term planning and programming, including the assessment and reporting of student outcomes. A key feature of the ILTLP project is supported school-based research and development undertaken by languages teachers. The ILTLP programme is being conducted in all States and Territories in the 2007 school year. This project complements the national projects funded under the SLP.

Guide to the Teaching, Learning and Assessing of Languages in the 21st Century (Guide)

The Guide is being developed for languages teachers and school leaders in Australian primary and secondary schools and after-hours ethnic/community language schools, to assist them in planning, resourcing, implementing and evaluating effective languages programmes based on an intercultural approach. The Guide will be complemented by a short online 'user's handbook' as well as online companion documents consisting of language specific support materials in a number of languages (for example, unit outlines and assessment tasks). The Guide will be available in October 2008.

Recommendation 23 refers to teacher education and page 65 of the paper mentions a possible "audit of the 'languages capacity' of Australian university. A current national project is indeed mapping teacher education and re-training opportunities for languages teachers across Australia. The *Review of Teacher Education for Languages Teachers* will provide a comprehensive national picture and will determine the extent to which teacher education courses prepare languages teachers for their profession. This includes investigating course entry requirements, content and structure, and structural impediments relating to the development of teachers' linguistic and pedagogical competency. The findings will provide a basis for further action to improve access to, and the quality of, preparation for primary and secondary languages teachers. The final report will be available later this year.

Recommendation 24 addresses the nature and availability of teacher professional development and learning programmes for school leaders on the value of languages. From a national perspective, there are two major professional learning programmes for languages teachers currently being funded. The first of these is the ILTLP project mentioned above. The second is a \$1.3 million professional learning programme which is being developed by the Australian Federation of Modern Language Teachers Associations (AFMLTA), the "Professional Standards Project", that will use the *Professional standards for accomplished teaching of languages and cultures* as a framework to address issues related to quality languages teaching. Development of this programme has just commenced and it will be completed by the end of 2008.

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With regard to learning programs for school leaders, the 'Leading Languages' project, which recently concluded, was a professional learning project for school principals and leaders in all education sectors. The aim of the project was to promote greater awareness and deeper understanding among school principals and leaders about action at the national level to support languages education, the current directions in languages teaching and learning, and the benefits of learning languages, particularly in developing valuable intercultural skills in students. A range of strategies ensured that school principals and leaders were informed and encouraged to play an active role in nurturing languages in their schools. This included face-to-face forums in each State and Territory, a website, and electronic and print communications. Around 400 participants attended the forums and feedback received has been positive.

Recommendation 28 calls for MCEETYA to support a nationwide media campaign to promote the value of languages education. Unfortunately, the resources to support a campaign of this magnitude are not currently available. Work has begun, however, on developing promotional and advocacy materials. The *Nationally coordinated promotion of the benefits of languages learning in schools* project represents the **first phase** in the development of nationally-focused promotional materials. The project includes the development of a Communication and Promotion Strategy and the development of a range of promotional materials and products. This will include the use of "champions" to promote languages learning. The materials will be targeted at school principals, schools leaders, students, parents and the community.

I note that you are representing ACSSO on the Project Advisory Group for this project. I welcome your input to the project.

All of the resources produced during the course of these projects will be available electronically, which addresses **Recommendation 9**.

For your future reference, the Working Party regularly provides updates on the progress of national projects on its website at: <http://www.mceetya.edu.au/mceetya/default.asp?id=15338>. This will allow you to remain up to date on activities being funded at the national level to support the National Plan.

Parent involvement/consultation

Recommendation 29 relates to parental involvement in the National Plan. The Working Party agrees that parents are significant stakeholders in planning for change. As mentioned above, one of the key roles of the Working Party is to provide advice to the Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) on its projects of national significance, from those identified in the National Plan. Through these projects every attempt has been made to include parents in the consultation and implementation process through inviting ACSSO and the APC to nominate representatives for the Project Advisory Groups for relevant projects.

I am sure that extensive consultation will take place in the development of any future National Plans and the Working Party will welcome the input of parent organisations.

In addition, page 40 of the draft paper makes reference to Indigenous languages and states "the parent organisations believe that the issue of indigenous languages is deserving of a research project in its own right". The *Investigation into the current provision of Indigenous languages programmes in Australian schools* is currently being conducted and the final report will be available later this year. The project aims to improve the sustainability and quality of Indigenous language programmes delivered in Australian schools, and to promote good practice nationally.

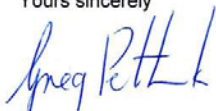
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6.

It will provide a snapshot of the current national situation in Indigenous languages education, including an analysis of existing models of teacher preparation and training for those involved in the delivery of Indigenous language programmes, and an evaluation of their relevance and applicability to the Australian context. As part of this project, examples of good practice in Indigenous languages programmes in schools reflecting different settings have been identified and evaluated. The final report will include recommendations for a second phase of action.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft discussion paper. We look forward to seeing the final document.

Yours sincerely



Greg Petherick
**A/EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CURRICULUM
CHAIR
MCEETYA LANGUAGES EDUCATION WORKING PARTY**

Date: 25/5/07

cc Terry Aulich

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ASSOCIATION
OF HEADS OF
INDEPENDENT
SCHOOLS OF
AUSTRALIA

**AHISA's response
to
ACSSO's Consultation Paper
National Survey of attitudes to Languages Education
2006-7**

May 2007

AHISA

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1. Introduction

- a. The concerns expressed over this subject area highlight some essential distinctions between school systems and sectors. Many AHISA member's schools have a long and positive culture of excellence in languages education. This positive culture complements the strong international perspective or outlook that characterises many independent schools.
- b. The complexity of a contemporary outlook for schools is noted in the paradox of addressing a focus on 'Australian values and culture', a strong focus on English language literacy **and** the importance of foreign language, the place of Australia in the world and broad cultural understandings. English-speaking countries appear to have a far greater philosophical and practical struggle in this regard than, for example, many European countries, whose focus on a rigorous study of their own language(s) and literary traditions has always been accompanied by the compulsory study of other languages. It is worth noting that this seems to remain the case despite their requirement to manage the needs of very high migrant populations.
- c. The Executive Summary of the paper comments the 'Aspirations and targets for languages education have not been matched by resources to deliver quality programs.' Languages education is but one area where political and/or community aspirations can exceed the capacity of many schools to deliver. It is a case of trying to be all things to all people – it is unrealistic to try to deliver programs in an unlimited number of languages, particularly when the appropriate resources are not available. There is no evidence that this is attempted elsewhere.
- d. This is another example of the mixed messages that school leaders in Australia must deal with. AHISA members balance community aspirations regarding a number of curriculum potentialities with the finite realities of the length of the school day, school year, the availability of quality staff and financial resources. AHISA members carefully match the goals of their school programs to well researched strategies, professional implementation and adequate resources to see the job well done.

2. Responses to Recommendations

- a. Recommendations fall into two broad groups. One grouping consists of the broad issues of community perception regarding language learning, broad community leadership or lack of it, workforce planning, system wide approaches, efforts to minimise the disjointed efforts between universities, school systems, and individual schools, and resources levels provided for languages learning.
 - i. AHISA supports in general terms, recommendations 1 and 2, 5-7, 9 and 10, 14, 18, 21, 23, 26, 27 and 29 as indicative of prudent planning and good practice.
 - ii. Although recommendation 3 is not well expressed, this is probably the single most significant issue of all. Prof Jo Lo Bianco (author of Australia's first National Statement on Languages) and Michael Clyne (*Australia's Language Potential*, 2005) make explicit reference to the cognitive and literacy benefits associated with the study of foreign languages. This recommendation does not give sufficient reference to the established links between the two. It confuses the issue by insisting that the study of English should somehow be correlated with the study of languages. However,

- if this recommendation was to be pursued, it requires more action at jurisdictional level with the production of templates and guidelines to assist teachers in schools before individual schools attempt any form of pedagogical 'mapping'.
- iii. The dearth of qualified staff and high quality staff in particular will continue to provide practical difficulties for many schools to implement the strong languages education focus. Anecdotal responses from members in outer suburban, regional or rural locations supports the survey finding regarding a lack of staff. There is evidence that there are enough real and potential language teachers but they are not motivated to work in schools because of the poor status of the subject and the constant battle to retain students against the appeal of alternative choices. Rectification of this position will require a medium to longer term focus on teacher education. State governments have used the money allocated by federal programs such as NALSAS and PLIE ineffectively because they would not take the hard decisions regarding provision of a limited number of languages that could be well resourced. Strong leadership across all sectors and levels of schooling is required.
 - iv. It is of note that languages education is but one area of school education that suffers from poor workforce planning and the absence of philosophical consensus. As above.
 - v. Recommendation 14 only partially address the disconnect between levels of schooling. This disconnect is a major impediment to the positive perception of languages learning amongst parents and students, presents logistic difficulties in many schools and sets up barriers to successful learning. This issue is set in context when an examination of the 'K-12' context of many independent schools indicates the success in language learning which can be developed for the students who start in the school whilst young and progress through into senior years. This disconnect is a major issue and not seen in non-English speaking countries where continuity in language learning is acknowledged to be of paramount importance. Primary and secondary school offerings must be synchronised to allow students to move between schools and systems in a way that supports effective teaching and learning. It is ridiculous to have children in feeder schools all learning different languages and then moving to high schools that offer none of these. Non-government school statistics indicate that the highest achieving students tend to include those who have studied a language throughout secondary school
 - vi. Recommendations 8, 15, 17 and 22 seem to set unachievable goals in the current context. The only way to achieve efficiencies and consistent standards in the delivery of foreign language programs to teach a limited number of languages in schools and universities (as distinct from community programs which should be funded separately), especially given international research showing that the acquisition of a second language makes learners extremely positive about future study of other languages. The premise should be to give Australian students a good start in a limited number of well-taught, well-

resourced languages rather than a shallow exposure to a great variety.

- vii. AHISA supports the differentiation between native and second language speakers in senior secondary course provision. However recommendation 16 goes on to suggest that the level of difficulty of Year 12 courses be examined. AHISA supports 'excellence' as an expectation of any senior secondary course. There are problems with the presence of large numbers of background speakers in some courses that have no differentiating mechanism and in some states the presence of many background speakers is recognised in these subjects' lower weightings. Conversely, the presence of many background speakers in non-background courses (i.e. Mandarin – where the length of time students have been in Australian education systems presents possible loopholes, and where Cantonese speakers have an advantage with some macro-skills) presents a disincentive for native English-speaking students.
 - viii. Whilst the purposes of languages education remain unclear in the minds of the broad parent population, whilst plans do not contain clear and achievable goals and professional implementation structures and resources are not guaranteed over the medium to long term, little positive change will be achieved. Individual schools, where those schools have the autonomy to pursue their own goals using good planning and implementation processes, will continue to see great success due to the community support provided to strong school leaders. In the broader context, language learning must be marketed firstly for its unique capacity to support personal, intellectual and educational development in general and to complement literacy skills in particular. Further benefits include careers, national prosperity, etc.
- b. The other grouping of recommendations involves the perceptions of languages learning within school communities, deals with school priorities, school structures such as timetabling and rooming and resource allocations within schools.
 - i. In many AHISA member's schools language learning is highly valued, well resourced and achieves high quality outcomes.
 - ii. These results stem from strong school leadership, ongoing tradition and practice parent community support and the ability of the school leaders to attract staff and to apply necessary resources.
 - iii. In schools where these components are not in place and arguably cannot occur at the school level, there is limited success to be gained until some of the matters outlined under the category of the broader issues are addressed.
 - c. Several recommendations (11 and 12) run counter to each other in a primary and middle schooling context.
 - i. The provision of release time for classroom teachers by language teachers in primary schools is criticised as counter intuitive to an effective languages program, based, it is assumed, on the learning integration and student centred learning philosophies of primary and middle schooling practices.

- ii. Yet all language teachers are recommended to require classrooms they can call their own. In a primary and middle schooling context these two philosophies do not link successfully. If language teachers have their own room in a primary or middle schooling context, there will be a cultural tendency to work separately as specialists. Alternatively, language teachers can use the classroom that belongs to the class with the cultural tendency that teachers work in a common student centred environment, integrating learning opportunities when prudent to do so.
- iii. The issue is not so much where the languages are taught but how much regular, high quality instruction the students get. In many European schools, where languages are strong, the teachers move, not the students. Very few teachers have their own rooms.
- iv. Current resource allocations suggest using 'release time' in primary schools is one of the few currently available means by which a primary languages program can be successfully implemented.
- v. The key is the level of systemic and institutional support for the subject area, including teacher training and the availability of appropriate resources. Foreign languages are specialist subjects, should be regarded as such, and given the respect they deserve.

3. Conclusion

- a. The goals of the National Statement for Languages Education in Australian Schools are achieved in many member's schools but remain aspirational for other schools across the country, including some member's schools.
- b. The rationale for languages education needs to be promoted strongly by leading community figures and school leaders. The success of the latter will be constrained without strong promotion by the former to move broader public perception towards greater levels of support for languages education. The percentage of parent respondents (19% only of a total response) to the survey perhaps indicates the low level of engagement with the issue amongst parents.
- c. Given the emphasis placed on learning languages from the region, it is essential that schools and systems explain that languages with other scripts will normally require double or triple the study time of those that use the Roman alphabet.
- d. Given the long lead time needed to train teachers and produce appropriate resources, there are obvious advantages to a new strategy for Australian schools that emphasises the delivery of high-quality programs in a limited number of languages. It is more important to emphasise the benefits of learning languages than to spend time and money finding ways to accommodate every interest group. School communities, and systems should encourage state governments to get over the political implications and take a sophisticated, pedagogically defensible position on languages as a key learning area.
- e. Any National Plan for Languages Education cannot succeed without the commitment of resources towards real and achievable goals and professional implementation over the short, medium and longer term.
- f. AHISA supports the importance of language learning and many of the recommendation made in the report.



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Chief Executive



Geoff Ryan
National Chair



Mr Rupert Macgregor
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RML

Dear Mr Macgregor

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the *Consultation Paper: National Survey of Attitudes to Languages Education 2006-2007*. I am responding on behalf of the Languages Unit at the NSW Department of Education and Training's Curriculum K-12 Directorate.

As a general comment, we would like to submit that, while we acknowledge that the consultation paper is seeking to address languages education issues across Australian states and territories, we do not believe that the paper acknowledges the significant support for languages education that is currently provided by NSW jurisdictions.

Recommendation 1

We believe that the *National Statement and Plan for Languages Education in Australian Schools 2005-2008* reflects the strong commitment of Ministers of Education in all Australian states and territories to the value of languages education. We fully support the development and implementation of a clear languages policy in NSW that would support this national commitment.

Recommendation 2

We support a National Implementation Plan 2009-2012 that would build on the current *National Statement and Plan for Languages Education in Australian Schools 2005-2008*. However, we strongly believe that the current Statement and Plan and the subsequent actions taken by the MCEETYA Working Party have done much to raise the profile of languages education, in generating projects and strategies that clearly reflect the plan's goal to improve the quality of languages education in Australian schools.

Recommendation 4

We support a designated 'Year of Languages' that would focus on identifying and implementing a range of employment incentives directed towards supporting existing

languages teachers, and addressing the issue of supply and retention of languages teachers.

Recommendation 5

We recognise that regional planning plays a critical role in the effectiveness of languages programs in schools, and would like to comment that in NSW the Languages Unit has implemented an action plan that provides direct support for regions by:

- providing on-the-ground support for regional languages initiatives, including a China Strategy in Western Sydney Region, to build the provision of Chinese language learning for non background speakers
- supporting schools, teachers and community groups in the implementation of Aboriginal languages programs, mainly in Western Region
- establishing or further developing regional languages teacher networks
- providing support for newly appointed and isolated languages teachers in regional areas
- facilitating technology-based solutions for curriculum guarantee.

The NSW Department of Education and Training also promotes flexible provision of languages through:

- the Saturday School of Community Languages, which offers students across school sectors the opportunity to study their background language up to the Higher School Certificate when it is not available in their day school. Twenty four languages are offered in 16 centres to over 4,000 students.
- the NSW Community Languages Schools Program, where schools are established by communities outside regular school hours for young people aged between two and eighteen.
- the Open High School, which provides an opportunity for students in Years 9-12 across school sectors to study languages through distance education. Approximately 2,000 students are studying courses in 11 languages.

Recommendation 8

The Board of Studies NSW offers a very large curriculum for languages in the K-12 range – in all, 76 courses in 35 languages. For K-10, there are 17 syllabuses, including the Aboriginal Languages syllabus. For the Preliminary and Higher School Certificate, there are 59 courses in 34 languages.

The number of courses reflects the cultural diversity of NSW and the importance placed on providing students with the opportunity to maintain and extend their skills in their background language and the value of languages as an essential part of the school curriculum.

Recommendation 9

The Languages Unit provides significant support for teachers across school sectors in a range of languages K-12 through its website www.curriculumsupport.education.nsw.gov.au

Recommendation 10

The issue of intercultural language learning is currently being addressed by the National Statement and Plan's current project, *Intercultural Language Teaching, Learning and Assessment in Practice (ILTLP)*, funded by DEST through the

Australian Government Quality Teacher Programme. In NSW, 90 teachers across school sectors are participating in this project, which is taking place from May-October 2007. This project involves important professional learning for teachers, including the opportunity to conduct school-based investigations.

Recommendation 11

Languages are not compulsory in the NSW primary curriculum. Some NSW schools use release time for the inclusion of languages programs in the primary curriculum, and the Languages Unit offers consultancy support for these programs. However, this consultation paper has not taken into account the significant support for languages learning in primary schools that is provided by the Languages Unit through its Community Languages Program K-6. This program allocates teacher positions to schools with a significant number of students from a particular language background in order to maintain and develop their home language. Thirty one languages are taught as part of this program to approximately 54,000 students in 159 primary schools by 240 qualified teachers.

In conclusion, we would like to express our appreciation to the Australian Council of State School Organisations and the Australian Parents Council for your active support for languages education. We look forward to seeing the final report of the national survey.

Yours sincerely

Julie Flynn
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in reply please quote:

GE05/0189

21 May 2007

Mr R Macgregor
National Projects Manager
Australian Council of State School Organisations Inc
PO Box 323
CURTIN ACT 2605

Dear Mr Macgregor

Re: Consultation Paper – National Survey of Attitudes to Languages Education 2006–2007

Thank you for the discussion paper 'Attitudes Towards the Study of Languages in Australian Schools' and the invitation to comment on its analysis and findings.

I would firstly like to congratulate you for undertaking such a large-scale survey which, in so doing, has already raised the profile of languages education in the community. The involvement of parents in promoting the study of languages is truly valued. Although many of the points raised in the document have been previously highlighted by National studies and State reviews, it is interesting and informative to have an insight into parents' perspective on languages.

The Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd (CECV) places great importance on the study of languages and has put in place a number of strategies to address many of the issues highlighted in the report, including:

- Revision of the CECV Languages policy (copy attached)
- Appointment of Languages personnel to support schools in implementing the CECV Languages policy
- Sponsorship program to support teachers to study languages or Language Teaching Methodology
- Professional development activities
- Language-specific networks
- Online resources for teachers of languages
- Inter-systemic involvement in a range of national and state initiatives

Challenges still remain. The implementation of further initiatives is greatly dependent upon the availability of additional Australian government funding and the general community attitude to languages. The continued efforts by your Organisation in endeavouring to achieve funding increases is appreciated as the students in all educational sectors reap the flow-on benefits.

I look forward to receiving the next version of the document for further comment.

Good wishes

Yours sincerely

Dr Teresa Angelico
ACTING CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Enc.



Department of Education & Training

Office of Learning and Teaching

OLT005375



Mr Rupert Macgregor
National Project Manager
Australian Council of
State School Organisations
P.O. Box 323
CURTIN ACT 2605

Dear Mr Macgregor

Thank you for providing copies of the Consultation Paper *National Survey of Attitudes to Language Education* to the Victorian Department of Education.

Language learning has long been recognised as an important element of the curriculum for students in Victoria. Until recently, school languages programs have been based on the Curriculum and Standards Framework II. Languages other than English (LOTE) is now one of the Discipline-based Domains in the Victorian Essential Learning Standards. Government schools will be expected to report students' achievement in language learning from Level 4 of the Standards in 2008. Progression measures are also included to provide a typical sequence of second language development leading to Level 4. The funding provided to government schools through the Student Resource Package includes approximately \$50m each year to assist schools to offer language programs.

The Consultation Paper produced by the Australian Council of State School Organisations and the Australian Parents' Council deals with matters which are very pertinent to the work of the Department's Languages other than English Unit, which is engaged in supporting languages programs in Victorian government primary and secondary schools. Issues such as teacher supply, professional learning and the promotion of language learning in particular are being actively addressed in Victoria.

For example, government school teachers are provided with scholarships to retrain in languages, including provision for up to 20 days study leave each year. The provision of comprehensive professional learning programs for teachers of languages is supported through the funding of regional LOTE officers, support for language advisors, funding for language-specific teacher associations and the Modern Language Teachers' Association of Victoria, and for cultural organisations. Extensive data on the nature and extent of languages teaching in Victoria is published and an annual report is produced which informs decisions about the Department's priorities for projects.

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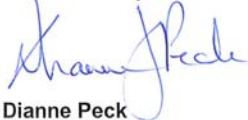


We have also put in place initiatives to promote the value of language learning to parents and young people. A series of four posters, two targeted towards each of these audiences, has been published and are currently being distributed to schools, public libraries and neighbourhood houses. Copies of these will be sent to you in the near future. A pamphlet written specifically to inform parents about the benefits of learning languages other than English is also being made available to our schools. A copy of this publication is enclosed.

I acknowledge that there are many challenges involved in working towards quality language teaching and learning in all of our schools, particularly for those located outside metropolitan areas. I wish you well with the finalisation of your project, and in your efforts to promote the learning of languages.

Thank you for bringing your report to our attention.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Dianne Peck', written over a faint circular stamp.

Dianne Peck
Acting General Manager
Student Learning Programs Division

16/5/2007



MINISTER *for* EDUCATION



1 6 MAY 2007

Mr Rupert Macgregor
National Project Manager
ACSSO
PO Box 323
CURTIN ACT 2605

Dear Mr Macgregor

Thank you for your letter of 15 April 2007 regarding the Consultation Paper: National Survey of Attitudes to Languages Education 2006-2007, and keeping me informed of the progress of your research in this area.

As you have indicated, community attitudes, particularly those of parents and families, have a significant impact on the success of languages programs and their uptake. I welcome the support of The Australian Council of State School Organisations (ACSSO) and Australian Parents Council (APC) in investigating these issues.

I agree with the comment in the Executive Summary that languages have been neglected at the national level in the last decade, but dispute the claim that all states "have allowed languages to languish".

In the past decade Tasmania has established a primary languages program that involved over 80% of primary schools throughout the State. Commonwealth funding for the National Asian Languages and Studies in Australian Schools (NALSAS) strategy gave the impetus for the program but the State Government has provided in excess of \$1.1 million per year to ensure that the program could be maintained. The program has sustained 68% of primary language programs, despite the withdrawal of NALSAS funding. In addition to establishing primary languages, Tasmania has had national recognition for its high quality professional development and well researched program development (Erebus Report, 2002) (ALPLP Report, 2005). Currently, research models in intercultural language learning and connections with literacy, ICT and thinking are also being investigated by Tasmanian teachers. The Department of Education has also provided grants to schools providing innovative models of delivery for quality and sustainable languages programs. Providing support at the local level that meets the needs of individual teachers and students is a priority of the Tasmanian Government.

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1 Franklin Wharf, Hobart, Tasmania 7000
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I would also like to respond to the questions on page 77 of the Report, that query the status and priority of languages education in Tasmania, its alleged absence in the Tasmanian Curriculum Framework, and the Department's commitment to the National Statement and Plan for Languages Education.

The study cites a quote from a Tasmanian teacher that is misleading, as the teacher is referring to a draft consultation curriculum document. In response to the feedback from Tasmanian languages teachers, languages have been more clearly defined and articulated within the Tasmanian Curriculum Framework. Languages (LOTE) have been placed within the English/literacy area and the document states that "encouraging, while not mandating, language study remains a goal of the Tasmanian curriculum." Teachers have been assessing against clearly defined LOTE Tasmanian Proficiency Outcomes. In 2007, teachers and curriculum officers are working together to develop revised and updated scope and sequence syllabus documents that will be implemented in 2008.

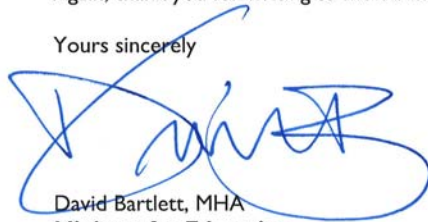
Tasmania has demonstrated significant commitment to the National Statement and Plan and is making ongoing contributions to national projects. The Tasmanian Languages Plan 2005-2008 has been developed with stakeholders to prioritise and address a range of identified issues across the strands. The Plan complies and aligns with the National Plan, but is informed by the local context, providing opportunities to focus on local priorities yet deriving benefits and resources from national collaboration. Our focus is on building support around the individual language teacher in the school and strong, interconnected teacher networks. We aim to embed change at the local level and to share and collaborate nationally. The recommendations and findings from the National Survey should further inform this work and help raise awareness across the community. I am pleased that you will be incorporating additional views into the Report, as it is important that the opinions drawn from a small sample are not translated into top-down uniform recommendations.

In Tasmania and nationally, there remain significant challenges in the equitable provision of high quality and sustainable languages programs. Languages programs are vulnerable and require strategic and sustained support to prevent long term decline. I agree that adequate levels of resource are vital for successful implementation of the National Plan. Funding alone, however, will not secure the future of languages programs. Innovative solutions, as well as further dialogue and input from stakeholders and partners are needed to gain commitment and support for successful implementation of recommendations and strategies. I support the claim in your report that we need to "address the complex set of societal and attitudinal factors which combine to constrain this curriculum area."

Finally, I would like to congratulate you and your Association for the work to date and I look forward to receiving the next iteration of the research. Thank you for providing the Department of Education with an opportunity to comment on this paper before final publication. The Principal Education Officer for languages, Sue Tolbert, will provide you with a detailed response to the recommendations and their relationship to the Tasmanian context.

Again, thank you for writing to me on this matter.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'David Bartlett', written in a cursive style.

David Bartlett, MHA
Minister for Education

Canberra-Goulburn Diocese

RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION PAPER: National Survey of Attitudes to “Languages Education 2006-2007”

GENERAL COMMENTS

In considering this paper it is noted that the respondents to the survey are people who have an interest in Languages Education and that is why they completed the survey. Therefore this brings an element of bias towards the results.

It is also noted that 39.8% of respondents were Language teachers (including 3.7% tertiary language teachers) clearly they have a vested interest.

29.7% of respondents were students (Years 5-12)

Although the survey was from the Australian Parent Council only 19.4 % of respondents were parents.

Only 8.2% of the respondents were Principals, as the report notes the Principals who responded were likely to be those with an interest in Languages Education.

The composition of the survey respondents explains the nature of many of the recommendations. The recommendations must be considered with due regard to the broader issues of curriculum balance and available resources- (funds/staff).

COMMENTS ON RECOMMENDATIONS

R1.

- No comment

R.2.

- What is meant by “fully funded”? How much? Funded from which budgets? Who would be responsible?
- Surely any future steps should focus on priority areas (see recommendation 6) and put any funding into the priorities first (e.g. teacher training /recruitment) rather than trying to address all steps at once.
- The comment that if the “fully funded” plan does not proceed MYCEETA should retract the National Statement is absurd! The National Statement is an aspirational document outlining ideas for the way forward in Languages Education. As such the National Statement should be applauded and be freely available as a directional plan which all involved bodies can access and use as appropriate.

R.3.

- There is some value to this in providing structure and consistency; research suggests a 2-way benefit.

R.4.

- A year of languages is an interesting idea, which could be very valuable
- It is interesting to note that despite the employment issues regarding language teachers (lack of job security, isolation, limited resourcing etc) that in this survey 31% of Language Teachers surveyed, agreed or strongly **agreed** with the statement

“Morale is high amongst my Language teaching colleagues, in both schools and Universities, regarding, the future of Languages” (page 31)

Almost one third is a high level of agreement and I have to question whether we would receive any higher level of feedback if this question was asked in regards to any other area of education.

R.6.

- It is a good idea to have priority areas clearly identified. Directing funding to those areas would provide structure and directions in an organized fashion. (Putting money into training and recruiting languages teachers need to happen before many of the other issues can be addressed)
- The comment on ‘pseudo actions’ is insulting.

R.7.

- I agree that levels of compulsory languages should not be increased. Languages should be available to all but not compulsory. For some students (specifically those with significant communication disorders) it is not appropriate and may even be detrimental to have compulsory languages. (Mike this is my personal viewpoint –research is not available on this as far as I am aware).
- It is important that the quality of Languages Education currently in place is improved, as currently it is extremely variable.

R.8.

- This has staffing implications. Recommendations 21 & 22 must precede this.

R.9.

- Yes – of course- we need to share information as much as possible and learn from each other.

R.10

- Yes Inter-cultural language learning continues to be unclear to many key people. Work is required in this area.

R.11.

- Release model is not working well. However this again raises staffing issues and also time issues for curriculum planning and class contact times

R.12.

- Yes- providing classrooms would permit use of posters, wall displays etc. It may also help to establish languages teachers as equal staff members, but would this assist in the “integrated approach to languages education” as mentioned in R.11? This is closely linked to which ‘model’ is accepted.

R.13.

- Raises issues regarding time and curriculum balance
- Languages do need to be taught frequently in regular blocks

R.14

- Yes- there is a problem in this area where languages taught at primary level are not available in the local high schools

R.15

- In principle yes- but again this raises staffing issues

R.16.

- No comment

R.17

- No point in promoting Languages unless staffing is available

R.18

- It is recognized that the earlier languages learning begins the better.
- However many parents in the survey stated that they wanted basic skills taught first.
- The first two years of primary are crucial for laying many foundations of education and much time has to be spent in the basics of positive learning behaviours. There are other crucial elements currently missing from our first few years of schooling such as the lack of time for learning development through play and the development of social and communication skills, the fact that they are omitted from these early years contributes to many of our later learning problems. Additionally it should be noted that the conceptual understanding of students in Stage One is limited and egocentric this makes the intercultural aspects of Languages Education difficult to be taught in any truly meaningful manner.
- Given the above comments I feel that it would be more appropriate to introduce languages at a later stage perhaps Stage Two, however again this is dependent on staffing issues. It may be more logical to work on improving staffing and then work on increasing languages education (provision and quality) from High School level first then working down through each stage level.

R.19

- No comment

R.20

- Yes, Languages teachers should have access to ICT, equal to that of other teachers in their schools/area.

R.21

- This is a key area- without the staff we cannot move ahead. This area should be given priority.

R.22

- Retention of teachers once employed is an issue; changes are needed in employment issues in order to improve this.

R.23

- No comment

R.24

- Yes- teacher PD needs to be examined

R.25

- Should this be individual schools, or Education Authorities?

R.26

- Yes- good practice should be shared.

R.27

- Why “publicly acknowledge” – surely a step too far!

R.28

- This is a good idea in principle- what about the financing issues?

R.29

- Only 19% of respondent to this survey were parents.

SYDNEY ARCHDIOCESE

Response to draft report "ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE STUDY OF LANGUAGES in AUSTRALIAN SCHOOLS" for the Australian Council of State School Organisations (ACSSO) and the Australian Parents Council (APC).

General Comment:

CEO Sydney has a long standing commitment to assisting school communities to focus on the place of Languages Education in their school communities, but in doing so, it also acknowledges that there are complexities involved in offering additional languages.

This report raises significant issues and heightens the need for wise decision-making based on sound educational priorities that reflects the needs of all stakeholders.

Although the findings of this report support languages education, the data collected is from a small representation of advocacy groups. Respondents were only invited to participate on a web based electronic survey and this may have limited the scope of each stakeholder group.

Whilst the report cautions against any interpretation of data within any subgroups, of particular note is the small representation from the parent group with only 20% of respondents participating. In my view, the decline in the number of students opting to undertake Languages at HSC/Stage 6 and Stage 5/elective, show that parents and students are "voting with their feet" We haven't seen a similar decline in other subjects that face many of the same difficulties ie Music, Visual Arts.

Perhaps if alternative choices in the method used to respond to the survey were available, it may have resulted in a wider representation in parent group inclusive of all socio and cultural backgrounds.

CEO Sydney has a large proportion of students in our Archdiocesan schools who are from a culturally and linguistic diverse backgrounds and a commonly held view of the parents of these students is to "teach English first". Contrary to this, many of the parents in our Catholic schools who are from non English speaking backgrounds are strong supporters of the Community Languages Schools Programs but this study did not include data on views relating to this.

Despite some of the limitations in the sample gathered in the study, this report emphasizes the importance of community, professional and government support needed in implementing Languages Education and paves the way for further action.

Overall, the findings of this report would seem to be relevant to any consideration in the development of strategies that would inform the National Statement and Plan for Languages Education in Australian schools.

As part of the validation exercise, CEO Sydney would like to put forward the following comments:

RECOMMENDATION 1

This is essential. In NSW there is no clear languages policy to support the national commitment to language learning. A languages policy does not exist in the State Policy and until this is addressed the 'big issues' in languages education remain ongoing.

RECOMMENDATION 2

This is correct. Without the funding to support these Programs they are at risk of not being adequately resourced.

Current funding is stretched in an already overcrowded curriculum and CEO Sydney, would need to divert resources from government educational initiatives including values education, literacy, numeracy, special education needs, benchmark testing, reporting to parents, the Secondary syllabus and so on

CEO, Sydney is not convinced at this point in time, that a fully funded National Plan for 2009-2012 will be produced and therefore, we would not be willing to divert resources until a sound financial commitment to support Languages Education, from both State and Federal governments, is forthcoming.

RECOMMENDATION 3

This is a significant aspect to successful Languages Education Programs. CEO Sydney recently published the Learning Framework – a Discussion Paper that explores successful pedagogy. This document articulates the importance of making connections for the learner and empowers school communities to investigate links between language learning and English Literacy.

Recent research studies into Bilingualism clearly identify the cognitive benefits of maintaining the first language.

No doubt professional development opportunities, training and the setting up of professional teacher networks would be needed to effectively implement this recommendation.

RECOMMENDATION 4

Given that the picture in schools is one of extreme variability this is a sensible recommendation. The strength of this recommendation lies in the enhancement of professional networks. These include professional associations, National and International Conferences, the Institute of Teachers, the Leadership Teams in schools and in Educational authorities.

Establishing professional links with colleagues in the Community Languages Schools would certainly raise the status and recognition of language teachers across all mainstream and non mainstream sectors

RECOMMENDATION 5

This is essential. Currently timetabling issues, the amount of time allocated to languages and competing curriculum areas impact significantly on any decision making regarding languages education at the school level.

Although we acknowledge that the status of languages education needs to be heightened at a government level, we also need to recognize the important role of the Principals and the school leadership teams in influencing the decision making in schools. The presence of positive attitudes and strong support from Principals and key leaders are conditions where quality educational programs thrive.

Encouraging opportunities for primary and secondary school principals, in both government and non government schools within a particular local area, to engage in more strategic use of school and community resources, would address some of the deficiencies.

RECOMMENDATION 6

This is not adequate. Until a sound financial commitment to support Languages Education, from both State and Federal governments, is made available over and above current government funding, we would not be willing to divert resources at the expense of other government initiatives.

Whilst the strands are highly valued per se, the level of resourcing made available to jurisdictions will impact on the seven strands and their effectiveness. Subsidising language programs should not be at the expense of other subjects!

RECOMMENDATIONS 7-20

For Strand 1: Teaching and Learning.

These are vital but will be very difficult to implement. In general, the current climate in schools, communities and national jurisdictions is apathy and opposition towards the value of learning languages in schools.

These recommendations identify key strategies that would need to be explored including inter and intra school networking amongst government and non government schools; primary and secondary transition processes; integrated approaches in the delivery of language programs; the role of ICT and promotion.

The associated costs would be extensive and the current resource constraints significant. Without additional funds this remains a vision rather than a reality.

RECOMMENDATIONS 21 – 23

For Strand 2: Teacher Supply and Retention: These are adequate. The ongoing challenge is to investigate creative opportunities to increase and maintain a supply of trained Language teachers within and across sectors.

This will occur when commitment is evident and confidence is restored.

RECOMMENDATION 24

For Strand 3 – Professional Learning. This is correct. The need for quality learning programs is paramount. The Institute of Teachers would need to have a greater profile in validating professional development and identifying levels of competency for the language teacher.

RECOMMENDATION 25 – 26

For Strand 4 – Program Development. This research study confirms that there is evidence to suggest that there are good quality language programs evidenced in schools. Hence these two recommendations build on this best practice.

However the development of a State Policy on Languages is needed to create a “ripple” effect and intervention by school leaders and at the educational authority level would improve.

The development of materials and models for courses is dependent on the availability of experienced and innovative language teachers. Tertiary institutions need to maintain and extend their Languages Faculties to ensure the supply of trained teachers (or teacher re training) is constant. Currently the University of Western Sydney is closing down a number of languages in their faculty (Vietnamese and Italian). No doubt a similar picture is unfolding in other Universities across the nation as competing agendas take precedence.

RECOMMENDATION 27

For Strand 5 – Quality Assurance. This is unclear. If Individual educational authorities are left to monitor language programs without a State Policy that reflects the National Policy, then the inconsistencies will continue to exist in the operation and delivery of these programs.

RECOMMENDATION 28

For Strand 6 – Advocacy and Promotion of languages learning; This is correct. In particular the need to reinvigorate the global view of languages education at a national level that sees ‘serious’ Government funding being allocated to it.

RECOMMENDATION 29

For Strand 7 Parent Partnerships. This study did not engage many parents in the survey and as such it became a victim of what it claims schools and educational jurisdictions are doing - treating them as “passive consumers”.

Schools are embedded in their local communities and as such we need to rightly recognise them as an essential component of this Plan!

Mary Karras
Sydney CEO
30thth April, 2007

Edited email from Dr Lindy Norris, Senior Lecturer in Education, Murdoch University to Rupert Macgregor, National Project Manager at ACSSO, 23 April 2007

Subject: Re: DISCUSSION PAPER ON NATIONAL SURVEY OF ATTITUDES TO LANGUAGES EDUCATION

From me, a big thank you to you and your organisation. It seems that, although the messages are not new, it has taken you and ACSSO to prick lots of consciences out there and hopefully now there is the potential for real action. The whole document is impressive but I have made some specific comments about certain aspects of it.

- Love the title.
- P.6 'The challenge is to attach appropriate funding.' This is the absolute essence and as you rightly point out the very big downside of the current National Plan. I love paragraph 2 on this page – says so much and says it so well.
- P.8 Recommendation 6 – I love the reference to 'pseudoactions'.
- P.9 Recommendations 11 and 13 are particularly important if there is to be any chance of success in this enterprise.
- P.11 Best practice case studies are a good idea as long as they are read /viewed. We have tried this before with varying degrees of success. I think a DVD would have more potential to make an impact (not to mention our teachers are fed up with continually having to read yet more documents). I would very much enjoy being a part of a project to put this sort of stuff together. (By the way, Have you seen *Two Languages Too: Second language learning and children with special needs*. We did this for the WA Ed department a number of years back – video for parents and one for educators. If you would like to have a look I can lend you a copy.)
- P.58 the comments about career advisors / counsellors in schools is very pertinent. A lot of damage is done to languages by these 'professionals'.
- P.61 Your paragraph depicting the talented young language teaching is very powerful indeed but I'm not sure that I'm game to share it with my students this afternoon.
- pp69-70 Yes, teachers and principals do need to engage with appropriate professional learning programs but we don't need to start from scratch here. FLOTE is alive and well, on-line, is constantly being updated (we are redoing Module 1a at the moment), and able to be accessed by anyone who is prepared to pay a small fee. The problem, however, is the small fee. I constantly get enquires about FLOTE but as soon as the fee is mentioned teachers loose interest. Time and funding are the resources that teachers need in order to be able to take advantage of what is already available. *Using the LOTE Planning Framework* is also still available via the NALSAS website and this can be very useful for schools who genuinely want to try to embed languages in a sustainable way. The problem with the package, however, is that it works best if externally facilitated. When we tried this with NALSAS, however, we had great difficulty in getting principals to be a part of the program – they were too busy to spend some quality time with their language teachers. I accept that perhaps I am a tad biased when it comes to the above resources but I do think that they are valuable and worthwhile inclusions in any discussion of available professional learning at a national level.
- P.80 I love Recommendation 27, and I can feel them all squirming from here.

Again Rupert, thank you for your wonderful work.

Lindy

Edited email from Professor Michael Clyne AM, School of Languages and Linguistics at the University of Melbourne to Rupert Macgregor, National Project Manager at ACSSO, 22 April 2007

Subject: Re: DISCUSSION PAPER: SURVEY OF ATTITUDES TO LANGUAGES EDUCATION IN AUSTRALIA

Dear Rupert

Your report is fantastic - warmest congratulations on it and its impact. I agree with just about every word. If there are a couple of things that could still be developed they concern the link between internal multilingualism and the teaching of languages. When you speak about 'community languages' is that people learning their home languages or extending it to everyone? What is the relation between schools of languages and mainstream languages in language teaching? Some states don't have them and aren't part of CCEFL. The number of people taking two LOTEs in Year 12 is a bad joke (In Vic, where those taking a LOTE is up to 22%, students with two in Year 12 is 0.0044%). Is there anything we can collaborate on in the future?

Best wishes
Michael