



**Australian Federation of Modern Language Teachers Associations
Inc. (AFMLTA)**

**P.O. Box 758
Belconnen,
ACT 2616**

Dr Peter Hill
Chief Executive Officer
ACARA
Level 10, 255 Pitt Street
Sydney, NSW 2000

26 June 2010

Dear Dr Hill,

I write on behalf of the Australian Federation of Modern Language Teachers Associations, the national peak body representing language teachers through their membership of the state/territory modern language teachers associations.

Over the last year and half our Association, and the Executive in particular, has been engaged in considering issues related to the development and framing of the Australian Curriculum: Languages. Following the last meeting of the executive and my own experience and reflection as a member of the 2009 Reference Group for Languages National Curriculum, we write to you again in order to state our position in relation to a key issue for national languages curriculum.

The issue is the need for a range of different pathways in languages curriculum. The curriculum needs for learners from diverse backgrounds with varying degrees of language learning experience and use must be acknowledged and reflected in differentiated curricula. Differentiated curricula will also require differentiated achievement standards. We maintain that it is impossible to use single achievement descriptions or standards to represent the achievements of the diverse learner cohort in Australian schools. The age of the learner, entry level into language learning, stage of language development, previous hours of study, and background use of the language in the home or community, all impact on the learning context and outcomes for the learner, highlighting the need for differentiation.

While Chinese is currently the language curriculum where variability is most visible, the same rationale is appropriate for other languages, to address the reality of continuity issues between schools in languages learned, duration, program type, time-on-task, multiple entry points and so on.

As languages teachers, AFMLTA members know that a single curriculum pathway and set of achievement standards are inappropriate to address these needs, are inequitable, and do not make sound pedagogical sense.

We trust that you will make the contents of this letter known to the 2010 Reference Group for Australian Curriculum: Languages, and that important dialogue can ensue to ensure that teachers' expertise in these matters will be recognised.

We look forward to your response to our letter.



Lesley Harbon
President, AFMLTA

CC
Rob Randall
Angela Scarino
Executive, AFMLTA