AFMLTA RESPONSE TO NURTURING PASSION AND IGNITING WONDER: NSW CURRICULUM REVIEW INTERIM REPORT

REGARDING: REFORMING THE CONTENT OF THE CURRICULUM: A COMMON ENTITLEMENT

The Australian Federation of Modern Language Teachers Associations (AFMLTA) writes to support the submission of its member, the Modern Language Teachers Association of NSW (MLTANSW), to the Review of the NSW Curriculum.

The AFMLTA welcomes the recommendations in the NSW Curriculum Review Interim Report in relation to a common entitlement for students to curriculum content, and specifically in relation to entitlement to learn languages. Every student in Australian schools should be entitled to opportunities to learn languages, including community and home languages, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages and additional languages.

We note the continuation of the inclusion of Languages as a key content and learning area of the Australian Curriculum and for all students in Australian schools as agreed to by all education ministers and identified in the recently released Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration (Education Council, 2019).

As the benefits of learning languages cognitively, academically, socially, personally and economically are well established (e.g. CASLT, 2016; Morgan, Scrimgeour, Farmer, Saunders and Dodd, 2016), and are positively associated with improvement of literacy and English language skills, to deny NSW children the opportunity to learn languages, and learn them effectively, no matter where they are located, in what year level, or from what backgrounds, fails the students, the state and the nation. Ensuring our young people are best prepared for their complex futures in a highly internationalised and globalised world, where multilingualism is the norm, and understanding of other cultures and linguistic and cultural perspectives is critical to their own and our nation’s success.

The recent PISA results for NSW reflect the urgent need for curriculum change in NSW, and increasing languages learning is one important way in which this might occur. NSW is an outlier in currently not including Languages as a learning area in primary school, leaving this optional as part of the HSIE curriculum. This situation must be addressed urgently, with the inclusion of Languages as key learning area in the primary years, and appropriate steps taken to develop a plan for languages education in NSW, that will align to the national plan, when it is developed.

The recommendations of the MLTANSW in their submission to this Review are supported by the AFMLTA. In particular we draw attention to the key aspirational goals identified in that submission, as positive steps towards ensuring the common entitlement identified in the Review.
KEY ASPIRATIONAL GOALS

1. **Establish an expert NSW Languages Education Advisory Panel** with broad expertise in languages education to consider Review recommendations in relation to languages education, and advice on further developments and implementation of the Review recommendations.

2. **Development of NSW Languages Education Policy and Plan** to provide oversight for sustainable languages education in NSW. This plan would be aligned with both the National Plan and Strategies for Languages Education when developed, and the new *Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration* (Education Council, 2019).

3. **Adopt Languages as a Key Learning Area (KLA) in NSW**, in line with content recommendations from the *Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration* (Education Council, 2019), which lists languages as one of the eight key learning areas.

4. **Increase languages programs in NSW pre-schools and primary schools**, with the explicit goal that within 5-8 years all NSW primary schools have a sustainable languages program taught by qualified languages teachers to ensure equity of access to the benefits of languages learning for all NSW students. A range of program and pedagogical models and approaches should be used, specific to local contexts.

5. **Increase Aboriginal languages programs**, in consultation with communities, and embed Aboriginal place, language and culture perspectives across the curriculum.

6. **Systematically increase the numbers of qualified languages teachers**, and resource languages teaching adequately for effective learning.

7. **Provide languages programs that meet the needs of the diverse cohort of NSW learners**.

The AFMLTA would welcome opportunities to consult with the Review panel, and to work with the MLTANSW to assist the New South Wales Education Standards Authority (NESA) in pursuit of these goals.

Should further information be required, please contact us.

Kind regards

Amanda Pentti
President

13 December, 2019