



Media Release

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NSW Curriculum Review - Response to the Final Report

The Modern Language Teachers' Association of NSW supports the recommendation stated in the final report calling for students to achieve proficiency in an additional language by commencing learning in the middle years as Australia continues to lag behind many other countries, including major English-speaking countries, in the number of students studying a second language. MLTANSW advocated strongly for the inclusion of languages in the primary curriculum throughout the review process.

Unfortunately, the NSW Government has expressed a concerning lack of detail around its commitment to support this recommendation in its response to the Review. Association President Fiona Boughey said, "We are very disappointed that the clear recommendation to provide a strong start to language learning in the middle years has not been supported by the Berejiklian government". The recommendation has only been 'noted' in the final report. NSW is the only state that does not offer languages as a key learning area in the K-6 curriculum. We also need more clarity around the continuation of the 61 language courses currently available in the senior years of schooling.

"Research on languages learning unequivocally shows that it has cognitive, academic, personal, societal, intercultural, and economic benefits, including an increased understanding of English literacy," Boughey says, "NAPLAN results indicate this latter point convincingly." Denying NSW children the right to the benefits of additional language learning afforded to children in other OECD, including other English-speaking nations, disadvantages the children, the state and the nation. Improved PISA and similar test results are one potential outcome of providing meaningful language learning opportunities to all NSW students.

In an increasingly globalised world, intercultural and language skills are critical to international engagement and are likely to deliver social, political and economic benefits to the state of NSW. Languages are the heartbeat and lifeblood of our multilingual and multicultural society.

"The MLTANSW strongly supports a middle years' start to languages programs," Boughey says, "We acknowledge that a phasing-in process will be necessary as part of a long-term plan for languages education in NSW, with the plan ensuring all schools have languages programs, as other Australian states do." Therefore we urge the NSW Government to direct its support and resources towards establishing and maintaining languages as an essential part of the NSW K-12 curriculum.

Contact

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The Modern Language Teachers' Association of NSW represents over 500 teachers in Government, Catholic and Independent schools and universities.