

MCEETYA LANGUAGES EDUCATION WORKING PARTY

Update on activities

May 2006

National Statement and Plan for Languages

The MCEETYA National Statement for Languages Education in Australian Schools and the National Plan for Languages Education in Australian Schools 2005 – 2008 was distributed to all schools and stakeholders in mid 2005.

Working Party establishment

In late 2005, the MCEETYA Languages Education Working Party was established. Membership is comprised of representatives of educational jurisdictions with direct reporting responsibilities to Ministers of Education, including the NCEC and ISCA. The Working Party is chaired by Terry Woolley, Executive Director, Department of Education and Children's Services S.A.

Working Party meetings

The Working Party plans to hold face-to-face meetings at least two times each year, with teleconferences in between. The Working Party has now met on two occasions in Adelaide: on 31st October 2005, on 10th March 2006. It will meet next via teleconference on 16th May, and again in Adelaide for a face-to-face meeting on 31st July.

Working Party Action Plan

The Working Party updates its Action Plan after each meeting. The Action Plan is aligned with the 6 strands of the National Plan:

- Teaching and Learning
- Teacher Supply and Retention
- Professional Learning
- Program development
- Quality Assurance
- Advocacy and promotion of languages learning

National Projects

In late 2005, DEST approved 8 significant national projects, as recommended by the Working Party, to be funded through the Australian Government's Schools Languages Program (SLP) from 2005 funds (approx \$1.2m). These projects, some of which have commenced, are being monitored by the Working Party. Most of these projects will conclude in 2007:

- *Project 1:* National coordination and quality assurance of ethnic schools. This project, being conducted by Community Languages Australia, is well

underway, with regular and comprehensive reports provided to the Working Party.

- *Project 2:* Enhancing the quality of Indigenous languages programmes through improved training and support for speakers of Australian Indigenous languages working in Australian schools. The successful tenderer for this project will be announced shortly.
- *Project 3:* Investigation into the state and nature of languages education in Australian schools, including the policy drivers and inhibitors that help or hinder the effective delivery of languages programmes. Tenders for this project closed on 27 April, and the successful tenderer will be announced shortly.
- *Project 4:* Development of a nationally co-ordinated promotion strategy. The Request for Tender is yet to be developed.
- *Project 5:* Review of teacher education for languages teachers. The Tenders for this project closed on 8 May, and the successful tenderer will be announced shortly.
- *Project 6:* Development of a Guide to the Teaching, Learning and Assessing of Languages in the 21st Century. The Request for Tender is yet to be developed.
- *Project 7:* ‘Leading Languages’ – a professional learning program for school principals and leaders. The Australian Principals Associations Professional Development Council (APAPDC) is being contracted to undertake this project.
- *Project 8* – National Seminar on Languages Education for Key Stakeholders. The Asia Education Foundation (AEF) is being contracted to organise this event, which will be held on the 30th and 31st October 2006.

These projects, and others yet to be identified, and to be implemented over the next 3 years, will have a positive and far-reaching impact on languages education in all states and territories and across all educational sectors.

The Working Party is currently considering project priorities to be developed through 2006 funds.

Complementing these national projects will be a national professional learning programme funded through the Australian Government Quality Teacher Programme. The main aim of this project will be to develop languages 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.

As a general approach, an Advisory Group will guide the development of each of the projects. These Advisory Groups may include representatives from:

- A state or territory government jurisdiction who is a member of the Working Party

- A non-government jurisdiction
- the Australian Federation of Modern Languages Teachers Associations (AFMLTA)
- the peak Principals Associations
- DEST
- the national parent bodies
- the Australian Council of Deans of Education (ACDE)
- the Deans of Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities (DASSH).

Decisions about specific membership of each Project Advisory Group will be guided by this general approach, and by the specific nature of the project.

Data collection

The Working Party is currently discussing options for the collection and analysis of student participation data, student achievement data, and teacher data, in order to monitor the state of languages education. This is a very complex area, and one where careful consideration is required, in recognition of differences across jurisdictions. Discussions will continue, and further information will be provided in later updates.

Copies of Statement and Plan

Further print copies are available through the MCEETYA Secretariat, and electronic copies available through their website.