



**MEDIA RELEASE**

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**NSW Governments' lack of commitment to the recommendations regarding Languages in the NSW Curriculum Review Final Report**

The Australian Federation of Modern Language Teachers Associations (AFMLTA) supports the learning and teaching of languages in Australian schools as a critical learning area, to prepare students for a globalised world in which multilingualism is the norm. The Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Declaration of 2019 acknowledges Languages as one of the eight learning areas, and every student in Australian schools is entitled to opportunities to learn languages, including community and home, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and additional languages and cultures. We welcomed the recommendations from the NSW Curriculum Interim Review Report in relation to a **common entitlement** for students to learn languages, from primary school, or earlier.

The AFMLTA supports the recent statement by its member, the Modern Language Teachers Association of NSW (MLTANSW) regarding the NSW Government's response to the recommendations in the NSW Curriculum Review Final Report, seeking clarification on the inclusion of languages in primary school curriculum, and for senior school curricula.

MLTANSW and the AFMLTA advocated strongly for the inclusion of languages in the primary curriculum throughout the review process. The benefits of learning languages, academically, cognitively, economically, socially, and personally are well established, and are positively associated with improvement of literacy and English language skills. AFMLTA President, Amanda Pentti stated "We support the position that NSW children, from all backgrounds, must have the opportunity to learn languages, and learn them effectively, in all locations and across year levels. Denying students the right to learn languages fails them, the state and the nation. The intercultural understandings are of benefit to all in our multilingual, multicultural society."

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 that it currently does not include Languages as a learning area in primary school, leaving this as an optional part of the Human Society and its Environment (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. In line with the recommendation of the final report on curriculum renewal, primary school children must have the opportunity to learn languages to a reasonable level of proficiency. We urge the NSW Government to include Languages as its own subject in the curriculum, in line with national standards. We support MLTANSW's call for a phased-in plan to introduce languages for all primary school children.

The AFMLTA also supports MLTANSW's request for the NSW Government to take a stronger stance on the provision of languages at the senior secondary level as it works with the NSW Education Studies Authority (NESA) to develop a new set of HSC subjects. Careful consideration needs to be given to the place of Languages in relation to the new set of subjects, to ensure our young people are best prepared for their complex futures.

**ENDS**

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