



CANBERRA REGION LANGUAGES FORUM UPDATE

August 2020

ACT NEWS

1. ACT THE FIRST AUSTRALIAN PARLIAMENT TO BEGIN EACH SITTING DAY IN AN INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE.

From 30 July 2020, the Acknowledgement of Country by the speaker at the start of each sitting day of the ACT Legislative Assembly will be in the Ngunnawal language. The wording has been determined in consultation with the United Ngunnawal Elders Council.

As ACT Chief Minister, Andrew Barr, said "We need to recognise that language is intrinsic to the culture and identity of Aboriginal people and to the intangible cultural heritage of all the people of the ACT. ... There is a need to recognise, and do what we can to support, revive and protect the languages of the traditional custodians and occupants of the land."

<https://www.canberratimes.com.au/story/6856088/historic-moment-ngunnawal-language-used-to-open-act-assembly-for-first-time/>

2. INDEPENDENT REVIEW ON INVESTMENT IN ACT COMMUNITY LANGUAGE SCHOOLS

The Strategic Development Group (<https://www.strategicdevelopment.com.au/>) has been awarded the contract to carry out this review. They are still in the process of finalising the exact format of consultations and discussions that will be used to maximise opportunities for as many people as possible to take part in the review.

The team undertaking the review are very keen to hear from a wide range of voices and are planning to provide full details of the process through the Multicultural eNews, the Multicultural Advisory Council and via social media in the coming weeks.

3. TASTE OF LANGUAGES COMPETITION

Have fun exploring the languages of family meals and food in the Canberra region

- Free and open to school students in the ACT area - preschool to Year 12
- Cash prizes up to \$100
- Closing date 1 September.

Organised by the ACT Bilingual Education Alliance with support from the ACT government.

See https://actbilingual.weebly.com/uploads/4/4/9/1/4491774/taste_of_languages_competition_actbea.pdf or email canberrabilingual@gmail.com for details.

4. CANBERRA ACADEMY OF LANGUAGES (CAL) INFORMATION EVENING

- 6pm Thursday 24 September 2020
- By teleconference

The meeting will provide information and advice on learning languages in Years 11-12, receiving credit for languages studies towards the ACT Senior Secondary Certificate and the ATAR, and CAL programs offered in Continuing and Advanced Languages for 2021.

In 2021 the Academy, a not-for-profit Specialist Education Provider for Senior Secondary Languages in the ACT, is offering courses in Continuing and Advanced French, German, Japanese, Spanish and Tamil. It may run programs for Arabic, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese and Korean if sufficient numbers of students are interested.

For more details see <https://www.cal.act.edu.au/news.htm> or email frank.keighley@cal.act.edu.au

5. NATIONAL CENTRE FOR AUSTRALIAN CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

Based at the University of Canberra, the Centre has just launched a freely available database of children's books by and about Aboriginal and or Torres Strait Islander Peoples. Funded by the Australian Government, this resource includes over 300 Australian children's books suitable for young people up to and including 12 years of age. Many of the books are solely in Indigenous languages while others are bilingual. The books are annotated, with subjects, curriculum links and teaching resources along with database features that offer varied uses for different interests. For details see: www.ncacl.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/NCACL_ResourceDatabase_A4_flyer_August20_WEB.pdf

NCACL has a similarly arranged 'Cultural Diversity Database' of children's books. The centre's collection of over 46,000 books also includes over 4,300 in overseas translations in 66 languages.

More details at <https://www.ncacl.org.au/>

INTERESTING INITIATIVES FROM OTHER STATES

6. NEW SOUTH WALES

During the COVID-19 period, the NSW Federation of Community Language Schools has arranged a number of free webinars conducted by local and international guest presenters (as well as the education officer) as part of their community language teacher training development series. Since April 2020, over 3000 teachers have registered, and 2048 actually attended.

The majority of these webinars are recorded and are available on the NSWCLS YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCy0EvVQIfuqv9qZvl0Pucfw/videos>

7. SOUTH AUSTRALIA

A Statement of Commitment and Collaboration between the Department for Education and the Ethnic Schools Association of South Australia (ESASA) was signed in November 2019. This includes a commitment to work collaboratively to

- Increase ECLS [ethnic and community language schools] program provision and participation – including at SACE [SA Certificate of Education] level, and to
- Strengthen the value and recognition of the ECLS program within mainstream schools, language specific communities and the wider community.

For copy of the Statement: https://www.education.sa.gov.au/sites/default/files/statement-collaboration-decd-ethnic-schools.pdf?acsf_files_redirect

Mainstream government schools are the most common teaching sites for ECLS in SA. Charles Campbell College, a R-12 school in a north-eastern suburb of Adelaide, was singled out in the July ESASA News as an exceptional host school. In addition to modern teaching spaces, the college offers the opportunity for three ethnic language schools to use the college's technology. The Principal is quoted as saying:

I'm proud that my school can support community groups to maintain and promote their languages, cultures and traditions. I believe that it is important for schools to embrace their community, and being able to share facilities is an important part of demonstrating this commitment. I think we have an excellent relationship with our ethnic schools and are hoping to involve them in our ongoing celebrations of diversity.

8. VICTORIA

Inspiring presentation from Dr Maria Gindidis of Monash University (one of the webinars organised by the NSWFLS). Based on her research, long involvement with language education, and taking her own community language school in Melbourne as a case study,

she discusses the challenges and opportunities for CLS to build on their newly acquired online skills. Positive outcomes she notes from the forced switch to online delivery include:

- greater parental engagement,
- much more speaking by students, and
- increased enthusiasm for, and enjoyment of, CLS classes

A great insight into teaching hybrid lessons with plenty of ideas to incorporate in any class. The presentation can be viewed at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mLE_IAXFbYw&t=1s

9. WESTERN AUSTRALIA LANGUAGES WEEK

This annual event in early August aims to raise awareness of the benefits of languages and language learning. It also provides an opportunity to acknowledge the vital role of interpreters and translators in our multilingual society. Resources developed for the week include information and ideas for teachers and parents to highlight and explore the linguistic diversity in the WA community and make languages learning fun and easy.

For more details see <https://www.omi.wa.gov.au/Languages/Pages/Languages-Week.aspx>

NATIONAL NEWS

10. SPOTLIGHT ON LANGUAGES IN TIMES OF CRISIS

The Covid-19 pandemic continues to highlight the importance of recognising and responding to linguistic diversity in all populations to ensure messages are reaching everyone, no matter what language or dialect they speak.

Just this week, the confusion that can arise from not adequately checking translations of health advice provided on Australian government websites has been highlighted: <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-08-13/coronavirus-messages-translated-to-nonsense-in-other-languages/12550520>

For some interesting research and discussion about language aspects of COVID-19 around the world, see <https://www.languageonthemove.com/category/language-and-health/>

11. RECENT REPORTS WITH INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES AT THEIR HEART.

- The National Indigenous Language Report, published on 27 July 2020

Stemming from Australia's participation in the United Nation's 2019 International Year of Indigenous Languages, the report acknowledges the centrality of language—both its absence and its presence—to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. It encourages organisations, including governments at all levels, to use the report's findings to inform policy, program development and delivery for this country's First Peoples. <https://www.arts.gov.au/what-we-do/indigenous-arts-and-languages/national-indigenous-languages-report>

- The Closing the Gap Agreement, released 6 August 2020

Signed by all states and territories and the Indigenous Coalition of Peaks, the agreement lists "Cultures and languages are strong" as one of 16 new socio-economic targets. <https://coalitionofpeaks.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/FINAL-National-Agreement-on-Closing-the-Gap-1.pdf>

For an article looking at these two report together, see <https://theconversation.com/talking-the-talk-fresh-closing-the-gap-targets-require-a-tailored-approach-to-language-143683>

FEEDBACK AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO FUTURE UPDATES WELCOME

Copies of previous Forum Updates are available at <https://canberralanguages.blogspot.com/p/forum-updates.html>