



## Submission No 32

### **Inquiry into Australia's Relations with the Republic of Korea; and Developments on the Korean Peninsula**

**Organisation: Office of the Board of Studies NSW**

**Contact Person: Ms Fran Trefry  
Senior Project Officer**

**Address: Office of the Board of Studies  
GPO Box 5300  
SYDNEY NSW 2001**

# **Inquiry into Australia's Relationship with the Republic of Korea**

## **Submission from the Board of Studies NSW**

### **1 The Board of Studies NSW**

The Board of Studies NSW was established by the *Education Act 1990* as a statutory body with a membership representative of education and community interests. The Board is responsible for the conduct of the Higher School Certificate and the School Certificate, K–12 curriculum development, and registration and accreditation of non-government schools.

### **2 Korean in the NSW School Curriculum**

The Board of Studies is committed to supporting languages learning in NSW in line with NSW Government policy. In order to qualify for the award of the School Certificate, students are required to complete 100 hours of study in one language over one continuous 12-month period between Years 7–10. Korean is one of the languages available to fulfil this requirement. The recently revised syllabus *Korean K – 10* (2003) allows for the study of Korean to commence in Kindergarten.

The review of courses for the new Higher School Certificate (first examined in 2001) confirmed the need for differentiated courses in Korean to take account of the diverse linguistic backgrounds of the students studying the language. The Board of Studies determined that the most appropriate course provision for HSC Korean should include a Beginners course, a Continuers course and a Background Speakers course.

### **3 Eligibility for HSC Korean Courses**

The Board has clearly defined eligibility rules that must be applied to distinguish between students who are eligible to do a Continuers course and those deemed background speakers. Likewise, there are very strict eligibility criteria for students wishing to study a Beginners course.

In the case of languages where there are both Continuers and Background Speakers courses, students must be enrolled in the Background Speakers course unless they can clearly demonstrate:

- *that their knowledge of the language derives solely from the study of that language as a second (or subsequent) language in an education system in which that language was not the medium of instruction; or*
- *that their knowledge of the language is derived from no more than one year's formal education (up to Year 1 or equivalent) in the language, in a country where the language is the medium of instruction.*

The Korean Background Speakers Stage 6 Syllabus describes the target group as students with a cultural and linguistic background in Korean. The eligibility rules are designed:

- to ensure the integrity of the examination
- to ensure that there is a distinction between those students for whom the language is learned as a second language and those who have some

background in the language, so that there are opportunities for genuine second language learners with no background in Korean to study a course commensurate with their experiences in and knowledge of Korean

- to ensure that no students are unfairly advantaged or disadvantaged in inappropriate courses.

The Board of Studies has delegated to the Principal of a school the authority to determine a student's eligibility to enrol in particular courses. In arriving at a decision principals take into consideration a range of factors, including whether the student has learned the language as a first or second language, and the nature and duration of any language instruction the student has received. It is not the aim of the eligibility rules to base a decision purely on the language spoken by the parents in the home.

#### 4 Participation in Korean Courses

Table 1 shows Year 10 (School Certificate) and Year 12 (HSC) entries in Korean courses since 1994.

**Table 1: Year 10 and Year 12 entries in Korean courses, 1997 – 2005**

Year	Year 10 Entries	Year 12 Entries		
		Beginners	Continuers	Background Speakers
2005	34	1	3	151
2004	50	0	12	142
2003	55	1	16	137
2002	60	0	13	109
2001	44	0	7	111
2000	50	0	9	149
1999	70	4	5	210
1998	72	0	14	175
1997	85	0	2	169

It can be seen from Table 1 that the vast majority of students study the Background Speakers course for the Higher School Certificate. Since 1994, the average candidature in this course has been 150. On the other hand, the average candidatures for courses designed for non-background speakers over that time have been very small. The average candidature for Continuers has been 9, while the average for Beginners is less than 1 candidate per year. For four of the last six years there have been no Year 12 candidates in Korean Beginners, while in the other two years there was a single candidate.

The issue of the continued viability of very small candidature languages has been canvassed at national meetings of languages officers from state curriculum and assessment agencies over several years. In May 2003 the Board endorsed the Australasian Curriculum Assessment Certification Authorities' (ACACA) proposal for the suspension and reactivation of very small candidature CCAFL languages. It is

now Board policy that when the number of candidates falls below 15 on a national basis in each of three consecutive years, the course will be suspended.

In November 2004 the Board advised that the Stage 6 Korean Beginners Syllabus would be suspended from 2007. Students who entered Year 11 in 2005 will be able to sit for Korean Beginners for the Higher School Certificate in 2006, but thereafter the course will not be available as a Board Developed Course. The 2006 HSC Korean Beginners examination will be the last HSC examination for the course. Should the interest in and demand for a Beginners Korean course at the Higher School Certificate level increase, the Board will give consideration to reactivating the course and to revising the syllabus.

Since the Korean Beginners course has been suspended, not deleted, there is the opportunity for schools where there is a potential candidature, to offer Korean Beginners as a Board Endorsed Course. If the numbers increase and there is clear evidence of ongoing demand for and sustainability of the course, the Board of Studies would consider reactivating Korean Beginners as a NSW HSC course.

Table 1 indicates that the number of students enrolling in Korean for the School Certificate is relatively small. While it is not a mandatory requirement for students undertaking the Korean Background Speakers course, the study of Korean for the School Certificate would benefit students who have been living in Australia for varying lengths of time. The new *Korean K-10 Syllabus*, implemented in schools for the first time in 2005, provides outcomes and content that are specifically designed to cater for these students and to afford them opportunities to develop greater breadth and depth of knowledge, understanding and skills that will facilitate their progress into and enhance their study of Korean at Background Speakers level in Stage 6.