Submission to the Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs

Inquiry into Language Learning in Indigenous communities

Denise Angelo

After speaking to the Standing Committee and reading much of the material submitted to it, I have been reflecting on the nature of the information and guidance provided by us all.

There are three kinds of language being referred to by submissions to this inquiry:
1. Traditional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages, the original languages belonging to specific tracts of country
2. Contact language varieties spoken by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as a result of past and ongoing language contact and language shift processes
3. (Standard Australian) English (SAE) as used in media, government services, education

Note that the term 'Indigenous languages' which refers to a primary focus of this inquiry can refer to both Traditional Languages and Contact Languages.

Traditional languages *are recognised and named as languages of country. They are widely acknowledged as having enormous cultural and heritage significance, and are thereby a focus for Indigenous identity and pride. There is a deep, abiding and widespread concern for the state of traditional languages, and a desire to resuscitate, revive or maintain them. In some remote local community contexts they are also the everyday languages of communication, and are therefore also a critical factor in the successful provision of essential services, such as education, health, governance etc.*

(Standard Australian) English *is the national language of Australia, used in public and private service domains such as education and media, and the language giving access to international communications. School improvement (National Partnerships) and equity initiatives (Closing the Gap) support children's performance in SAE and NAPLAN (National Assessment Program - Literacy and Numeracy) measures student performance in SAE. Data about Indigenous students' second language proficiency in SAE is not available at a system level.*

*The **Contact Language varieties** are the "elephant in the room": Contact language varieties are spoken across many regions as first languages. They differ from traditional languages in that they are not generally perceived as worthwhile target languages but are acquired and used due to their role as the everyday and primary languages of communication. They have the most speakers of any Indigenous language. The variation within and between such non-SAE and non-traditional languages is greater than has been recognised and is little understood. They are our best hope of understanding how to create better educational outcomes and experiences for most young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.*

With these distinctions in mind I wish to make the following recommendations:

Recommendation 1: Create a mechanism for research, education and training and capacity-building within the complex Indigenous language ecologies in remote areas, involving a

place-based, collaborative, interdisciplinary team of local language speakers, language specialists and language educators administered by a national secretariat but operating on the ground at a regional level, and independent of state education department policy.

Recommendation 2: Revise – and henceforth create – policies and documents (e.g. Closing the Gap) to make language *consistently* visible and to include outputs and targets relating to language, be it traditional, contact or (second language proficiency in) Standard Australian English.

Recommendation 3: Acknowledge in new/revised policies and documents the need to identify the relevant (i.e. local or regional) language ecology in terms of the three different kinds of language, i.e. Traditional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages, Contact Language varieties, such as creoles, mixed languages and dialects and Standard Australian English, to determine local linguistic needs, likely effective approaches, and necessary courses of actions.

Recommendation 4: Realise in policies, documents and other government advice a distinction between traditional Indigenous languages in rightful need of revival and resuscitation to redress their past wrongful suppression and to act as a positive focus for Indigenous culture and identity *versus* the recognition of Indigenous languages (traditional or contact) spoken as the vernacular or everyday variety of communication to manage the inclusion of their speakers in equitable government service delivery (e.g. classroom learning, health services, legal affairs etc).

Recommendation 5: Include Indigenous languages in education, including in Early Childhood settings, in terms of:
- employing like-language speakers to communicate with children and their families;
- utilising students' first languages to foster their classroom learning where feasible;
- acknowledging traditional languages to encourage pride and strengthen identity;
- teaching children (with community approval) using methodology appropriate to place.

Recommendation 6: Support language revitalisation and maintenance initiatives with high quality language education programs, ensuring real skills for Indigenous participants, and providing training and funding for the "language teams" which recognises the complexity of developing and delivering these language courses.

Recommendation 7: Institute a method of collecting *accurate* system level language information which goes beyond the present Language Background Other Than English (LBOTE) category to both clearly include Contact Languages in *main* languages spoken, and as well as to provide an indication of the second/subsequent language proficiency of Standard Australian English (SAE), particularly with reference to Indigenous (EFL/ESL/ESD) student performance measures.

Recommendation 8: Produce a planned, developmental and systematic EFL/ESL Foundation-Year 10 syllabus (or curriculum) to guide teachers' instruction of Indigenous students in EFL/ESL classroom contexts, *particularly* for use in those schools where entire

student cohorts are learning SAE virtually as a foreign language. Revise current ESL/EAL/D offerings for senior years to ensure systematic ESL teaching focus rather than adaptation of a mainstream curriculum.

Recommendation 9: Fund Indigenous EFL/ESL education (in addition to refugee and migrant ESL funding) and provide achievable and measurable second language targets for all funded EFL/ESL programs.

Recommendation 10: Provide guiding principles devised by a nationally respected panel of experts to assist schools in judging the plethora (of wasteful and ephemeral) 'fix-it programs' continually brought into the domain of Indigenous education, which are not cognisant of local language ecologies, and hence of students' EFL/ESL learning needs.

Recommendation 11: Improve Indigenous language interpreting and translating services by identifying existing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people currently facilitating communication and providing *paid* and *ongoing* training for these people, in addition to recruiting more trainees, by rewarding government services for *using* Indigenous interpreters and by researching Indigenous clients' post-service experiences and understandings.

Recommendation 12: Ensure that implementation of the Report of the Inquiry goes to a body which understands the issues.

1. MECHANISM FOR MORE ON-THE-GROUND AND INTERDISCIPLINERY TEAM-BASED RESEARCH AND IMPLEMENTATION

- Much expertise that has hitherto been 'silo-ised' within separate disciplines and traditions of research can be most fruitfully applied by ensuring a "cross-fertilisation" of respective knowledge and experiences.
- Complex language situations need a suitably complex array of expertise, consisting of collaborative constellations (teams) comprising language speakers, language researchers (e.g. linguists), language educators (e.g. ESL/LOTE specialists and educators).
- Such teams must operate on-the-ground (i.e. as opposed to administratively heavy and regionally distant), although some "work from outside" is clearly possible via modern technologies.
- A secretariat could be more centrally placed for on-going training, networking and sharing, monitoring, data collection and collation.
- The teams would carry out on the ground, place based research, training and implementation.
- The make-up of each team must include a local Indigenous speaker of a local variety.
- The structure needs to have influence and be involved in implementation of state delivery of education, but would not be controlled by state policy and administration.

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specialists and language educators administered by a national secretariat but operating on the ground at a regional level, and independent of state education department policy.
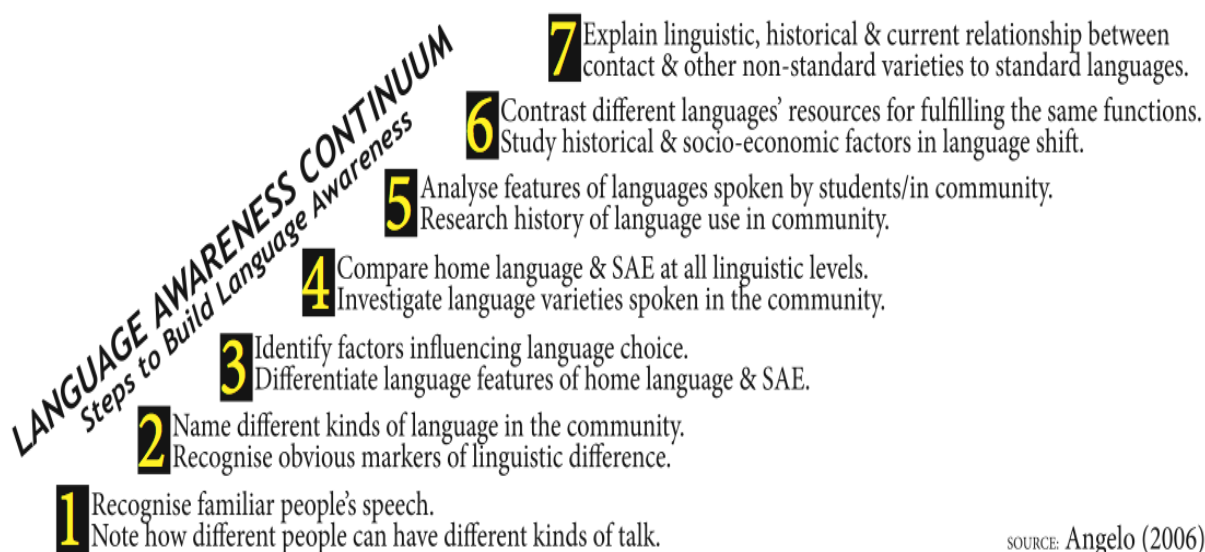
2. RESPONSIBILITY FOR MAKING LANGUAGE CONSISTENTLY VISIBLE IN GOVERNMENT POLICY AND DOCUMENTS

- Current national documents only rarely – and very inconsistently – refer to language so to effect change in the area of the learning of Indigenous languages and of SAE, leadership is required to re-introduce the category of "language" and to make it consistently visible.
- In the context of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, documents need to be examined through he lens of local language ecologies (i.e. three language varieties: traditional, contact and SAE) to determine the extent to which they are variously involved so that this can be included in all appropriate policies/documents/advice pertaining to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and services.
- There is a wider problem in education documentation, namely the overlooking of language and the subsuming of it in broader discourses such as literacy and culture.
- For the purpose of discussing Indigenous students' performance in NAPLAN, it should be noted that there is no systemically available second language proficiency data. Although there are a variety of second language assessment technologies available, there is no requirement for such technologies to be used by systems or for language proficiency data to be included as targets and outcomes.
- Associated with the drive for improved education outcomes, there are targets for literacy and numeracy in SAE, but similar targets for proficiency in the English language – the language variety in which these literacy and numeracy outputs are typically measured – are needed (e.g. after two years schooling, what should a student be able to do in English?). Without any attention to second language proficiency as a target, inappropriate and wasteful interventions proliferate.
- Although LBOTE (Language Background Other Than English) data is collected and reported on in for NAPLAN, LBOTE is a problematic category. It neither reliably gives indications of students' second language proficiency in English, nor does it specifically include – and thereby encourage the declaration of – contact language varieties.
- Specific and explicit training for people devising language data collection technologies (e.g. official forms) needs to be conducted, including census collection teams in remote areas who were unaware of contact language varieties during their work in the recent census.
- Improvement agendas around government service delivery and outcomes for Indigenous people, e.g. National Partnerships, need to include a communication strategy addressing how services will respond to the local language ecologies (i.e. who speaks what so how will effective communication occur)

Recommendation 2: Revise – and henceforth create – policies and documents (e.g. Closing the Gap) to make language consistently visible and to include outputs and targets relating to language, be it traditional, contact or (second language proficiency in) Standard Australian English.

3. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF LOCAL LANGUAGE ECOLOGIES AND THE DEGREES OF PROFICIENCY IN THREE DIFFERENT KINDS OF LANGUAGE

- Local, place based language ecologies exist in remote communities due to our complex contact histories in Australia. Language processes (e.g. language contact, language shift, creolisation) have occurred and are occurring in different places at different rates, with different time depths and with different admixtures of languages.
- Typically recognition, if any, goes to traditional Indigenous languages and English; contact language varieties require a process whereby shared understandings of their nature and validity need to be fostered. If we want to talk about a language variety that is generally unacknowledged, we need to *develop* ways to talk about it (see *Language Awareness Continuum*, Angelo 2006, extract reproduced here).

LANGUAGE AWARENESS CONTINUUM
Steps to Build Language Awareness

7 Explain linguistic, historical & current relationship between contact & other non-standard varieties to standard languages.

6 Contrast different languages' resources for fulfilling the same functions. Study historical & socio-economic factors in language shift.

5 Analyse features of languages spoken by students/in community. Research history of language use in community.

4 Compare home language & SAE at all linguistic levels. Investigate language varieties spoken in the community.

3 Identify factors influencing language choice. Differentiate language features of home language & SAE.

2 Name different kinds of language in the community. Recognise obvious markers of linguistic difference.

1 Recognise familiar people's speech. Note how different people can have different kinds of talk.

SOURCE: Angelo (2006)

- The degree to which each variety is used and the extent of community members' proficiency in these varieties needs to be factored in to any determination of programs and service provisions. See Table 1, below:

Table 1: *Examples of thinking about a local "language ecology"*

Traditional Languages	Contact Languages	(Standard Australian) English
- Is it a "strong" language? i.e. Is it the language of the community, used for most everyday interactions? Are children learning it "automatically", as their first language? - Is it a language with fluent speakers, but its use/transmission has been disrupted? - Is it a language with only some speakers (of partial fluency) or with some archived material? - Is there a recognised local "language of place"? Does this match the affiliation of the majority of the local population? Does it match the availability of proficient speakers?	- Is there a "contact language" variety in use in the community? - Is it spoken by community members to each other? Is it used with people who don't speak the local language? - Do all generations in the community use the contact language? - Is the contact language "distant" from SAE, i.e. (mostly) not mutually comprehensible with it? - Is the "contact language" (almost) indistinguishable from SAE at a surface level, as in some varieties of Aboriginal English? - Is the contact language variety recognised in the community in any way? How do/would people refer to it?	- Is this a "foreign" language, i.e. one that isn't used outside of the classroom? - Do all students in the classroom share a common language variety other than SAE? Do students use SAE with each other ever? - Would students experience a proportion of purposeful SAE interaction with SAE speakers? e.g. Is it spoken fluently by a proportion of students/adults in this context and used frequently with those who are learners of it? - Would students see themselves as learners - and possible speakers - of SAE?

Recommendation 3: Acknowledge in new/revised policies and documents the need to identify the relevant (i.e. local or regional) language ecology in terms of the three different kinds of language, i.e. Traditional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages, Contact Language varieties, such as creoles, mixed languages and dialects and Standard Australian English, to determine local linguistic needs, likely effective approaches, and necessary courses of actions.

4. DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE ROLES FOR i. INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES TO BE LEARNED *VERSUS* ii. EXISTING INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES OF COMMUNICATION WITHIN A COMMUNITY

- An understanding of local place-based ecologies needs to be brought to bear on discussions of Indigenous languages, which terminology may encompass both traditional and contact languages.

- *Traditional* Indigenous languages (i.e. original languages belonging to specific tracts of country) have a rightful place in school education – as long as there is support from the local Indigenous community – and should be supported to be studied in school contexts.
- The degree to which students know the *traditional* language (as described in the local language ecology)will determine the role of *traditional* Indigenous language in these students' education and the nature of *traditional* language program appropriate: Where students are less than fluent in a *traditional* language because it is not spoken around them as the vernacular, the program will take the form either of a revival or a resuscitation approach where students are fluent, traditional language programs can will have a maintenance focus.
- Where any Indigenous language (i.e. *traditional or contact*) other than English is an everyday vernacular, however this needs to be factored in to communication strategies in all manner of contexts including classroom, health, policing, community governance etc.
- Government responses (policies, documents, advice) need to respond to the language situation in communities with vernaculars other than English, but <u>there are a range of possible responses, e.g.</u>:
     - a form of bilingual education, with or without first language literacy, which harnesses students' pre-existing first language proficiency for delivering and learning classroom content;   - a developmental ESL/EFL program with specific methodologies to familiarise the language and content being delivered and learned through a language in which students are not yet proficient
- Due to complex socio-cultural attitudes, *traditional* Indigenous languages as vernaculars generally generate high levels of interest in maintenance and use in school contexts, whereas contact languages spoken in Indigenous communities do not garner the same interest.

Recommendation 4: Realise in policies, documents and other government advice a distinction between traditional Indigenous languages in rightful need of revival and resuscitation to redress their past wrongful suppression and to act as a positive focus for Indigenous culture and identity versus the recognition of Indigenous languages (traditional or contact) spoken as the vernacular or everyday variety of communication to manage the inclusion of their speakers in equitable government service delivery (e.g. classroom learning, health services, legal affairs etc).

5. INCLUSION OF INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES IN EDUCATION

- Education needs to respond to local language ecologies in Indigenous communities.
- Where Indigenous languages, *traditional or contact*, are spoken as the community vernacular or by the majority of families attending the school, employment of "like language" speakers should be obligatory to facilitate communication across a variety of roles, e.g. in classroom settings - teacher aides; in school community liaison -

liaison officers; in contact between school staff and parents - (paraprofessional) interpreters; in office administration for data collection, enrolment interviews, subject interviews - (paraprofessional) interpreters.

- Children's first languages are by definition their strongest means of communication and the use of these should *absolutely and without question* be allowed, and also be fostered where context allows (i.e. if there are other like language speakers).
- School learning programs must be a response to the local language ecology and make linguistically informed and sound choices about their practices. So, where Indigenous students do not speak SAE, schools need to have an approach to how students will i. learn classroom content; ii. add SAE to their existing linguistic resources
- Where entire cohorts share the same first language, learning approaches which harness students' first language proficiency should be implemented including – at the very least – use of first language oracy in Early Childhood settings and classroom learning contexts in order to establish foundational concepts effectively.
- First language oracy (and perhaps literacy) **or** *heavily* scaffolded EFL/ESL programs will assist with transmitting content meaningfully. EFL/ESL teaching programs acknowledging and responding to students' first languages will assist with adding SAE to Indigenous students' other linguistic resources.
- In areas where contact languages are still stigmatised for public purposes, including classroom education, and/or where there is a variety of first languages amongst students, awareness approaches acknowledging students' first languages but using second/foreign language methodologies for teaching SAE might be most appropriate.
- Traditional languages should be included in education in the manner appropriate to the local language ecology: maintenance, revival or resuscitation or at the very least through acknowledgement of local traditional language group(s).
- The local traditional language should be made available (with the support of useful curriculum, relevant teaching resources, appropriate levels of staffing, supportive training) as a target language in schools, with community approval.

Recommendation 5: Include Indigenous languages in education, including in Early Childhood settings, in terms of:
- employing like-language speakers to communicate with children and their families;
- utilising students' first languages to foster their classroom learning where feasible;
- acknowledging traditional languages to encourage pride and strengthen identity;
- teaching children (with community approval) using methodology appropriate to place.

6. SUPPORT FOR LANGUAGE REVITALISATION AND MAINTENANCE INITIATIVES WITH HIGH QUALITY LANGUAGE EDUCATION PROGRAMS

- Where community support exists for teaching a traditional language in schools, support is required to ensure that these are of the highest quality, including language learning criteria appropriate to the local language ecology.

- Resourcing these **new language programs** should be commensurate with the complexity of the task, which often involves introducing new languages into a school context or school curriculum format and creating appropriate teaching resources as well as up-skilling a variety of participants to deliver the program.
- A variety of training procedures needs to be developed to assist the various participants, in particular Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language speakers and/or language learners who will deliver language content and who will usually need ongoing training.
- Funded roles and a suite of role descriptions and job conditions and pay levels would be useful to schools looking to implement traditional language programs.

Recommendation 6: Support language revitalisation and maintenance initiatives with high quality language education programs, ensuring real skills for Indigenous participants, and providing training and funding for the "language teams" which recognises the complexity of developing and delivering these language courses.

7. COLLECTION OF ACCURATE SYSTEM LEVEL LANGUAGE DATA, INCLUDING ON INDIGENOUS EFL/ESL/ESD STUDENTS

- The Language Background Other than English (LBOTE) category refers to somebody who themselves and/or either of their parents speaks a language other than English and as such includes a highly varied range of English language proficiencies, not necessarily correlating with any second language learning needs.
- Despite the existence of a variety of ESL assessment tools, systems do not collect and/or report on performance of Indigenous ESL/EFL/ESD student. Any measure of ESL student performance conducted in English **could** be a measure of their second language proficiency, but there is no measure to disaggregate this effect nor, thus, to guide policy and/or pedagogical responses.
- It is widely believed that the large regional creole languages in Australia (i.e. Kriol and Torres Strait Creole) have by far the most speakers in any Indigenous languages, but poor data collection methods often manage to hide this fact. Existing data collection is in urgent need of revision to ensure explicit inclusion of contact language varieties.
- Local language ecologies need to be described through research and other innovative ways of awareness raising and collecting language data. Poor language data provides a poor basis for service delivery and communication so inappropriate and wasteful responses proliferate.

Recommendation 7: Institute a method of collecting accurate system level language information which goes beyond the present Language Background Other Than English (LBOTE) category to both clearly include Contact Languages in main languages spoken, and as well as to provide an indication of the second/subsequent language proficiency of Standard Australian English (SAE), particularly with reference to Indigenous (EFL/ESL/ESD) student performance measures.

8. PLANNED SYSTEMATIC EFL/ESL/ESD SYLLABUS OR CURRICULUM MATERIALS

- Second language learning in classroom contexts proceeds most efficiently with explicit and developmentally staged language teaching in a meaningful context.
- There is no current National curriculum for Foundation to Year 10 to guide non-specialist classroom teachers. (To date ACARA has provided non-systematic annotations for mainstream curricula which fall short of this requirement.)
- ACARA's current EALD curriculum offerings for the senior years should also be revised to include the language learning needs of Indigenous EFL/ESL learners, who need explicit teaching of SAE language (i.e. inflections, verb forms, sentence structures and vocabulary), both for university entrance level as well as for a "non-matriculation" subject.
- Concentrated efforts are being made to improve Indigenous students' educational outcomes, but the vital ingredient in which these outcomes are measured is <u>language</u>.

Recommendation8: Produce a planned, developmental and systematic EFL/ESL Foundation-Year 10 syllabus (or curriculum) to guide teachers' instruction of Indigenous students in EFL/ESL classroom contexts, particularly for use in those schools where entire student cohorts are learning SAE virtually as a foreign language. Revise current ESL/EAL/D offerings for senior years to ensure systematic ESL teaching focus rather than adaptation of a mainstream curriculum.

9. FUNDING FOR EFL/ESL/ESD EDUCATION WITH MEASURABLE SECOND LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY TARGETS

- Many Indigenous students are EFL/ESL, but funding specifically tied to their EFL/ESL status or proficiency level in English is not provided, nor are their proficiency levels measured: Improvement agendas often "raise the bar" by setting targets and using funding programs to encourage engagement in their achievement. Second language proficiency of Indigenous students would benefit from such an approach.
- ESL/EFL targets for Indigenous students could consist of a statement of desired general proficiency level per year in school, plus guidance and measurement around some more specific, taught language features and language uses.
- Non-targeted funding can be wasteful, especially in the complex area of Indigenous disadvantage where all too often simplistic 'fix-it-up' programs, playing to the pre-existing strengths of the providers rather than the needs of the receivers, are implemented.
- 'Language' – requiring somewhat specialist skills and understandings – rarely makes it onto the agenda in a climate of generalised, non-targeted improvement. General literacy programs with no associated model of second language acquisition (SLA) are a good example of what not to do.

- It should be noted that general supportive ESL approaches used in cities, where children are immersed in daily purposeful usage of English, do not transfer to remote Indigenous contexts where children are in foreign language contexts and do not hear English outside classrooms.
- Indigenous students who have a contact language as their first language have an extra layer of complexity added to their language learning of SAE due to historical relationships between their vernacular and the lexifier language (i.e. English), which requires particular language methodologies.

Recommendation 9: Fund Indigenous EFL/ESL education (in addition to refugee and migrant ESL funding) and provide achievable and measurable second language targets for all funded EFL/ESL programs.

10. GUIDING PRINCIPLES TO INDIGENOUS EDUCATION PROGRAMS MATCH LOCAL LANGUAGE ECOLOGY AND HENCE LEARNING NEEDS

- Language education, particularly in complex language situations, requires a measure of expertise and experience. Schools and school personnel operating in such contexts should be given the benefits of expert opinion.
- The justifiable concern with Indigenous students' educational outcomes can create a climate of merchandising and "quick-fix" education products and programs, marketed as solutions to schools who are trying to improve their Indigenous students' engagement and performance, without the benefit of any particular linguistic expertise or guidance.
- Undue pressure, often with the best of intentions, can be placed on schools to take up programs of supposed effectiveness which entirely overlook local language ecologies.
- Schools and systems would benefit from the publication of a set of guiding principles to ensure linguistically informed decisions.

Recommendation10: Provide guiding principles devised by a nationally respected panel of experts to assist schools in judging the plethora (of wasteful and ephemeral) 'fix-it programs' continually brought into the domain of Indigenous education, which are not cognisant of local language ecologies, and hence of students' EFL/ESL learning needs.

11. IMPROVEMENT OF INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE INTERPRETING AND TRANSLATING SERVICES

- Improve Indigenous language interpreting and translating services by

  - identifying existing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people currently facilitating communication,
  - recruiting additional (approaching proficient) bilingual people for interpreter

training,
- providing paid employment for Indigenous interpreters in all states,
- providing ongoing training and accreditation at paraprofessional levels and beyond
- rewarding government service providers for using Indigenous interpreters &
- funding research into the clients' understandings of their services.

- Successful communication with Indigenous communities and their individual members occurs to the degree that correlates with the communicating parties' levels of proficiency in a shared language.

- Most commonly, the language utilised for service provision in Australian contexts is SAE, but little data is available about levels of proficiency in SAE in Indigenous communities, or even amongst Indigenous school students.

- Government funded services would be more efficient and effective if clients understood the information provided and processes required, and were able to give their information and explain their situation and be understood.

- Trained and qualified interpreters need to be factored in to service provision to remote Indigenous communities, particularly in "high stakes" interactions.

- Ongoing training courses, including but also beyond the paraprofessional level, need to be developed and delivered to ensure an increasing number of trained Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander interpreters of increasing levels of expertise.

- Exit-research into clients' understandings of services needs to be funded to highlight the service gaps which poor communication (due to language differences) can cause.

- Government service providers should be rewarded for using interpreters - e.g. by subsidising costs of interpreters, but also by showcasing improvements to services.

Recommendation 11: Improve Indigenous language interpreting and translating services by identifying existing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people currently facilitating communication and providing paid and ongoing training for these people, in addition to recruiting more trainees, by rewarding government services for using Indigenous interpreters and by researching Indigenous clients' post-service experiences and understandings.

12. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REPORT OF THE INQUIRY

- From the preceding points, it should be clear that there is a level of knowledge, expertise and on-the- ground experience required for understanding the issues pertaining to the complex language situations and language learning contexts in Indigenous communities.

- A considerable amount of the information provided in this submission to the Inquiry has been relatively recently developed and much more is in need of ongoing research.

- It is clear that a body which only develops policy responses, without any substantive knowledge base or facility for responding to recent research, could find implementing report findings in a meaningful way difficult.

- I personally often experience complaints from educators about "why aren't we taught this" (about Indigenous students' language situations and ESL/EFL learning needs) and queries from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members about "why don't people notice" (about students not understanding their SAE-speaking teachers or books written in English etc).
- It would be a tremendous result for this Inquiry to be able to put behind us a period of neglect and ignorance about local language ecologies in Indigenous communities, and to put in its place a fresh outlook for working with traditional languages, contact languages and SAE.

Recommendation 12: *Ensure that implementation of the Report of the Inquiry goes to a body which understands the issues.*