

Senate Committee: Education and Employment

QUESTION ON NOTICE

Supplementary Budget Estimates 2015 - 2016

Outcome: Schools and Youth

Department of Education and Training Question No. SQ15-000846

Senator Lines, Sue provided in writing.

Making foreign language education compulsory

Question

In relation to The Coalition's Policy for Schools: Students First p13:
Work with the states to make the study of at least one foreign language from Year 5 to Year 10 compulsory within a decade

- a. Has the Department been asked to commence work to implement this? What is being done?
- b. Has there been any work with the states? What has been done? What is underway? What is the timeframe?
- c. Is the Gov still committed to this? When will it be delivered?

Answer

The Department of Education and Training is considering options on a nationally consistent approach to language learning over the next decade. Once advice has been developed, the Australian Government will work with the states and territories through the Council of Australian Governments Education Council.

The Government is also implementing a number of measures to ensure increased participation in a range of languages:

- The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority has been tasked with developing additional curricula for 16 foreign languages in the Australian Curriculum.
 - On 18 September 2015, Education Council endorsed the Foundation to Year 10 Australian Curriculum, including Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Modern Greek, Spanish and Vietnamese.
 - Consultation on the draft Turkish and Hindi curricula occurred during mid-2015. It is expected the final curricula will be available for use by December 2015.
 - Work is continuing on Auslan and classical languages.
- The Asia Education Foundation is conducting a research project to provide a comprehensive analysis of the provision of language education in Australia and to explore strategies to support improved take-up of language study in senior secondary years.
- Teach for Australia undertakes targeted recruitment activities to identify potential outstanding future teachers from the community, including immigrants, bilingual people and other professionals with language skills. The Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group included a recommendation that: higher education providers equip all primary pre-service teachers with at least one subject specialisation, prioritising science, mathematics or a language. Revisions to the 'Accreditation Initial Teacher Education (ITE) Programs in Australia: Standards and Procedures' to be agreed by Education Council in December 2015 program standard 4.4 will require:

“In addition to study in each of the learning areas of the primary school curriculum sufficient to equip teachers to teach across the years of primary schooling, programmes provide all primary graduates with a subject specialisation through:

- a) clearly defined pathways into and/or within a programme that lead to specialisations that are in demand, with a focus on subject/curriculum areas
 - b) assessment within the programme requiring graduates to demonstrate expert content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge and highly effective classroom teaching in their area of specialisation
 - c) publishing the specialisations available, and numbers of graduates per specialisation through their annual reports.’
- Teaching is included on the Skilled Occupation List. Education authorities can recruit language teachers when they are unable to do so locally.
 - The Early Learning Languages Australia (ELLA) trial of language learning apps (Chinese, Mandarin, Japanese, Indonesian, French and Arabic) and educator support in 41 preschools will be completed at the end of Term 4 2015. The trial will determine the effectiveness of providing preschool children with early exposure to a language other than English through online learning programmes.