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| **Key Areas of the ACT Languages Policy : 2012-16** | **Actions/Implementation of policy aims or suggested input of new/revised content** |
| **Theme 1: English as the National Language**  ***All Canberrans will have the opportunity to acquire English language skills, both oral and literate, in recognition that English is our national language.***  ***Policy Aim***  That English language programs are readily available to Canberrans who wish to learn the English language.  ***Policy Implementation***  The A The ACT Government will continue to support English as an additional language or dialect and to fund English language programs for Canberrans who wish to learn English.  These programs will continue to be delivered through the public school system (Introductory Language Centres) and through funding agreements with key service providers in the local community sector, where there is demand. | **Report on your activities, comment on current policy and/or suggest new ideas or ways to strengthen the policy**  **Activities**  The ACT Bilingual Education Alliance (ACTBEA) supports this area of the policy by providing information on where and how CALD Canberrans can learn and practice English in the ACT. It does this through   * a page on its website (<http://actbilingual.weebly.com/english-language.html>), which includes details of formal programs plus classes and conversation groups offered by ACT Libraries, churches and community, and * Information stalls and displays at public events such as the National Multicultural Festival.   ACTBEA also publicises the benefits of joining a public library to access English learning materials (books, CDs and DVDs) and online resources such as the [English Language modules through Mango Languages](http://www.library.act.gov.au/eresources/mangolanguages)  ACTBEA also provides information and practical advice on the value of making full use of the community’s linguistic resources for English language learning and development.  **Ideas for strengthening the policy**  1 Explicitly acknowledge the importance of valuing home languages and dialects for English language development.  Far from being a problem, research has constantly shown that speaking another language at home, or indeed learning one at school, can assist children’s English language development. Recognising this, and ensuring that appropriate support programs are in place, is especially important for young children whose caregivers are more confident and/or fluent in a language than English. Giving children a rich language foundation (oral and written) in the family setting is key way to prepare them for success in standard Australian English and literacy at school.  2. Acknowledge the work of ACT Libraries in the promoting and supporting English language proficiency. |
| **Theme 2: Language Services** | **Report on your activities, comment on current policy and/or suggest new ideas or ways to strengthen the policy** |
| ***To communicate in clear and plain English, and to provide opportunities for Canberrans to use language services so they can access ACT Government funded services and programs.***  ***Policy Aim***  Through the ‘Language Services’ section of the *2012-16 ACT Languages Policy*, the ACT Government will ensure:   * services and programs provided by the ACT Government directly or through non-government organisations are responsive to the needs of clients who are unable to communicate effectively in English; * that ACT Government directorates have improved interactions with clients who do not speak or read the English language well or at all; and * that the rights of Canberrans who are unable to communicate effectively in English to gain access to government funded services are not compromised by this inability.   ***Policy Implementation***  To implement this section of the *2012-16 ACT Languages Policy* and ensure that Canberrans who are unable to adequately communicate in English can access services that are responsive to their needs, ACT Government directorates are required to:   * use clear and plain English when communicating orally and in writing with clients; * ensure that, where possible, staff act on the obligation to provide effective, efficient and inclusive services through appropriate use of interpreters for people that are not proficient in English; * acknowledge the entitlement to have access to professional interpreter services or to linguistically appropriate information by people who experience language barriers; * acknowledge that facilitating access to interpreting and other language services is the responsibility of ACT Government directorates in the course of service provision; * determine when interpreters and translators ‘must’, ‘should’ or ‘may’ be used based on legislative requirement, the particular service provided and/or the level of risk to clients’ rights, health or safety; * ensure that all staff who deal directly with clients are aware of how to determine the need for professional interpreters and are trained in cross-cultural skills; * ensure that all staff who deal directly with clients are aware of how to access and use interpreting and translating services; and * implement appropriate budgets and assistance, where possible, for funded non-government organisations to engage interpreter services for service delivery in accordance with legislative requirements.   The ACT Government will also continue to support the promulgation of information in relation to government services and program in languages other than English through programs such as support for 100 or so local ethnic radio broadcasters and through the 250 multicultural community groups in the ACT.  The ACT Office of Multicultural Affairs (Community Services Directorate) will issue practical guidelines later in 2013 to assist ACT Government directorates implement this aspect of the  *2012-16 ACT Languages Policy*. |  |
| **Theme 3: Learning Other Languages**  ***All Canberrans will be encouraged to learn and treasure languages other than English.*** | **Report on your activities, comment on current policy and/or suggest new ideas or ways to strengthen the policy** |
| ***Policy Aim***  The ACT Government will ensure Canberrans have access to high quality language learning opportunities and will enhance access, choice and continuity of language programs in both the ACT public and community sectors.  Together the ACT Government and the ACT community languages sector will endeavour to deliver sustainable language programs in the ACT that are underpinned by the ready supply and retention of quality language teachers.  The ACT Government will work closely with the *ACT Community Language Schools Association Inc* to develop community understanding of languages education including acknowledgement of the increasing need for languages education in a changing global context, increased linguistic and intercultural capacities of the ACT teaching workforce, and development of positive attitudes towards languages education among students, families, teachers, community groups and education leaders in the ACT.  ***Policy Implementation***  The 40 community language schools that are members of the *ACT Community Language Schools Association Inc,* other community and private language education providersand government public schools play an important role in delivering community language education to the ACT community.  The ACT Government will continue to deliver language learning through its curriculum in ACT Public Schools as well as through direct and indirect support to the local community language schools sector.  ACT Public Schools have flexibility in how they implement their curriculum plans and deliver their teaching and learning programs provided that, schools provide students from Years 3 to 6 with a minimum of 60 minutes per week of languages education in one of the eight priority languages – French; German;Italian; Spanish; Indonesian; Japanese; Chinese/Mandarin; and Korean.  For Years 7 to 8, ACT Public Schools provide students with a minimum of 150 minutes per week of languages education in one of the eight aforementioned priority languages. Other languages such as Hindi may be included in the future where additional resources become available.  It should be noted that the current curriculum in the ACT may be enhanced through the future Australian curriculum being developed by the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority.  The ACT Government will continue to provide financial support, where possible, to the ACT community language schools sector to: enhance the delivery of quality languages education in the ACT from (playgroup ages through to adult levels); enhance professional development of teachers; and implement a quality assurance framework for better educational outcomes.  The ACT Government will work with the ACT languages sector to develop a campaign to promote the benefits of languages education and influence positive attitudes towards languages education in our community.  The ACT Government will continue to encourage schools to be aware of and value language learning outside the school – in the home, the community and in after-hours programs. | **Activities**  The ACT Bilingual Education Alliance (ACTBEA) is actively involved in meeting this policy aim.  ACTBEA supports the maintenance and development of bilingual skills in the Canberra region and recognition of the value of these skills for community harmony, individual and cultural identity, and life and work in the ACT. ACTBEA works with families, schools, preschools and the wider community to promote awareness of language resources in the Canberra community, providing opportunities for the development and expansion of social and support networks, and spreading information about the benefits of having skills in other languages and practical ways to maintain and develop these.  ACTBEA activities to achieve the above include:   * maintaining a website (<http://actbilingual.weebly.com/>) * producing and distributing free periodic updates (email list has over 600 subscribers) * organising information stalls and displays at community events * giving talks and organising seminars for families and schools and other groups who invite ACTBEA to present * facilitating networking and fun activities with languages at social events (such as pot luck lunches and the NMF)   ACTBEA gratefully acknowledges the support of Canberra Multicultural Community Forum Inc (CMCF), funding through the ACT government’s Participation (Multicultural) grants and a dedicated group of passionate volunteers that make these activities possible.  ACTBEA, together with a small group of other community language supporters and education providers, meets with the curriculum area of the ACT Directorate of Education times a year to share information and discuss issues related to languages education in the ACT. This is a valuable opportunity to increase communication and cooperation across sectors.  **Ideas for strengthening the policy**  1. Introduce measurable outcomes to evaluate the ACT Government’s goal “to encourage schools to be aware of and value language learning outside the school – in the home, the community and in after-hours programs”.  ACT Public Schools could be required be report on their activities which acknowledge and support the languages children bring with them to school. This will not only assist the learning of English but also contribute to children’s educational success, personal and cultural identities, and family and community relationships.  We are aware that some schools have a mother tongue policy. In addition, many teachers of English as an additional language or dialect (EALD) actively support the use of LOTE within class and within children’s families. Some schools may also recognise language learning in community language schools through newsletters or by including the languages in school reports or portfolios. Schools may also encourage children to read some books in their home language for the Chief Minister’s Reading Challenge. Reporting on these activities will not only assist in evaluating the ACT Languages Policy but provide ideas and models that other schools may follow.  2. The ACT Government should be proactive to ensure “the ready supply and retention of quality language teachers”.  The ACT Education Directorate could approach the ANU and UC about expanding options for students wishing to become teachers of languages.  We are aware that UC currently offers science, technology and mathematics specialist options in its Bachelor of Primary Education program, and that students can now combine a Bachelor of Science (BSc) from ANU with a Master of Teaching (MTeach) from UC. Are there any plans to offer languages specialist options in UC’s primary teacher education program, or for UC and ANU to offer a joint degree in the preparation of languages teachers?  3. The ACT Government should convene a round table of local organisations and groups within the languages sector “to develop a campaign to promote the benefits of languages education and influence positive attitudes towards languages education in our community”. |
| **Theme 4: Languages and Economic Benefit**  **Our city will be able to maximise the economic benefits arising from the multitude of languages we speak and from our well developed local ‘English’ learning programs** | **Report on your activities, comment on current policy and/or suggest new ideas or ways to strengthen the policy** |
| ***Policy Aim***  The ACT Government will maximise the economic benefits arising from the multitude of languages spoken in the ACT and from the well developed local ‘English’ learning programs. | ACTBEA supports the inclusion of this theme within the ACT Languages Policy. Canberra’s multilingual community represents a valuable linguistic resource which needs to be recognised, nurtured and developed so it can be best used for the benefit of the ACT services sector, trade, investment and economic growth.  The views of relevant sections of ACT Directorates and organisations such as Visit Canberra and the Canberra Business Chamber should be canvassed to guide the implementation of this area of the languages policy and further develop this theme. |
| ***Policy Implementation***  The ACT Government will pursue opportunities for the promotion and provision of English language education to students and teachers from other countries.  The ACT Government will ensure that accreditated translators and interpreters are available for workplace safety information. |  |
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| Theme 5: Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages (taken from the context section of previous policy) | **Report on your activities, comment on current policy and/or suggest new ideas or ways to strengthen the policy** |
| ***The ACT Government recognises that there were several Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages spoken in the Canberra region. In keeping with standard practice, these languages are collectively referred to as ‘Australian languages’.***  ***The ACT Government acknowledges and respects the continuing significance of Australian languages for the heritage and cultural prosperity of this region. Every effort will be made to retain, preserve and use Australian languages in the ACT region.***  ***The Council of Australian Governments through the National Indigenous Reform Agreement has endorsed the service delivery principles for Indigenous Australians. Through these principles, all governments have recognised the importance of Indigenous interpreters in engagement and service delivery.*** | ACTBEA supports the sentiments expressed in this key area and recommends it be explicitly addressed as a separate theme in the updated ACT Languages Policy. The Aims and Implementation for this area of the Policy should be clearly stated. |