

Canberra Region Languages Forum Update October 2012

1. ACT LANGUAGE POLICY 2012-2016, MANY VOICES

This long awaited government policy appeared without much fanfare just before the ACT government went into caretaker mode in the lead up to the upcoming ACT election.

The policy makes a number of commitments to promote, enhance and safeguard the language skills in the ACT community. These include to:

- work with the ACT languages sector to promote the benefits of languages education and influence positive attitudes towards languages education in our community
- encourage schools to be aware of and value language learning outside the school – in the home, the community and in after-hours programs
- encourage all Canberrans to learn languages in addition to English
- make every effort to retain, preserve and use Australian languages in the ACT region
- provide interpreting and translation services and use plain English to ensure access and equity to programs and services provided directly by the government or through NGOs
- make English language programs readily available to Canberrans who need to improve their English proficiency (oral and/or literate)

While short on detail about funding or how implementation will be assessed, this policy is a clear statement of the ACT government's commitment to developing the language skills of all Canberrans and valuing the vital role of languages in personal, family, community and economic life. See www.dhcs.act.gov.au/multicultural/publications for a full copy.

Forum members are invited to actively help in monitoring and adding to the effectiveness of the policy. Policies cannot bring about change on the ground without organisational and community input and support.

If the actions of the ACT government and its agencies do not measure up to the rhetoric in the policy, you can make your views known to the agencies concerned and to the Office of Multicultural Affairs (email nic.manikis@act.gov.au). You can also share your views on the Languages Forum blog at <http://canberrallanguages.blogspot.com.au/>

Organisations and groups might also consider using the policy as a basis for applying for governments funding and support!

In view of the upcoming ACT election, we have asked the Canberra Liberals and ACT Greens for their position on the policy. Any responses will be posted on the Languages Forum blog

2. A FORUM FOR LOCAL PARENT GROUPS (P&Cs), ESL TEACHERS, AND NEW AND EMERGING COMMUNITIES IN THE ACT

Thursday 18 October 2012, 6-9pm, Centre for Teaching & Learning, Fremantle Drive, Stirling

This joint initiative of Companion House and the ACT Council of Parents & Citizens Associations will provide a chance for community leaders, parents and mentors to exchange information and discuss local schooling and cultural transition to build stronger relationships in education.

Light refreshments provided

For more information and to register, please contact Hong Sar on 6251 4550 or email: hongsar.channaibanya@companionhouse.org.au

3. ACT COMMUNITY LANGUAGES SCHOOLS OPEN DAY

Saturday 27 October 2-6pm, St John's Church Hall in Reid

Find out more about the schools that teach over 35 languages to about 1700 students in the ACT region every week. Enjoy free games, performances, craft activities and displays in many languages, and purchase delicious snacks and food from around the world.

For more details see www.actclsa.org.au, email admin@actclsa.org.au or phone 6230 5191 after 15 October (the office is currently closed for the school holidays).

4. ANU SUPPORT FOR THE TEACHING OF LANGUAGES IN THE ACT REGION

a) Language teaching series - part of the ANU School of Languages seminar series 2012

- 26 March: Ros Phillips, *Dickson College Refugee Bridging Program*
- 21 May: Gabriele Schmidt/Martha Florez, *Benchmarking languages*
- 5 November: Carol Hayes, *Digital storytelling in Japanese language teaching*
- 10 December: Louise Jansen & Daniel Martin, *The ANU Retention Project: Five years hence*

For more information, or if you would like to be added to the distribution list for ANU seminars on language teaching, please contact admin.sls@anu.edu.au

b) Workshop for teachers Thursday 11 October, 4-6pm, ANU

The Association for Spanish Teachers of ACT (ASTACT) and the ANU Spanish Program has organised a pedagogic session "TeacherInABox Workshop" which is free and open to everyone. This workshop will be delivered in English.

Since only 20 people can register because a limited number of computers is available, please contact martha.florez@anu.edu.au to book and for more information

The **TeacherInABox Project** is a pilot project building a web portal to store, share and access interactive lessons for Australian schools. For more information see <http://www.teacherinabox.net/>

c) Italian Program outreach

The ANU Italian program seeks to increase motivation and enhance language learning by bringing together ANU students and staff, school and colleges, and the wider community.

An example is the recent co-sponsoring with the Italian Embassy of a performance of *Promessi Sposi (The Betrothed)* by Massimiliano Finazzer Flory troupe (Milan, Italy). This production brought together the words of Alessandro Manzoni, the best-known writer of united Italy, with music by some leading contemporary composers.

5. COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES TO PROMOTE LANGUAGES

- Chinese, German and French scout groups
- Bilingual story times
- German Story Night

For more details see <http://actbilingual.weebly.com/events.html>

6. ACT LIBRARIES AS LANGUAGE HUBS

ACT Libraries are keen to encourage maximum use of their huge range of free resources in many languages: online through <http://www.mylanguage.gov.au/> and in local branches in the form of books, magazines, newspapers, music and DVDs. Local libraries are also a great support for learners of standard English – through print, online and free conversation and social groups. Have look at www.library.act.gov.au for more information.

The libraries would also like to develop a program of regular bilingual story times or other bilingual events at its libraries in 2013. For more details, contact sarah.steed@act.gov.au

7. TRAINING FOR COMMUNITY INTERPRETERS

The pilot training program organised by Canberra Multicultural Community Forum and CIT Solutions is in full swing. Twenty of the 50 people who crowded into the information session about the project in July are enrolled in the program, which will end in November 2012. The course does not lead to a formal qualification, but does prepare participants for the NAATI paraprofessional examination.

Depending on the level of demand and funding available, CIT Solutions may continue to offer such a course in the future and seek to have it accredited.

Languages represented in the class include Croatian, Bosnian, Serbian, Farsi, Persian, Kurdish, Arabic, Urdu, Dari, Somali, Italian, Dinka, Arabic (Sudan), Hindi, Punjabi, Bengali, Hindi, Vietnamese, Russian and Polish.

Organisers are looking for speakers of these languages who also speak good English to be mentors for the students. If you can help, please call Ailsa on 6296 4321 or email her at ailsat@netspeed.com.au

8. OUR LAND OUR LANGUAGES: LANGUAGE LEARNING IN INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

Released on 17 September, this report of the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs provides recommendations for maintaining Indigenous languages. It notes:

“The important role that Indigenous languages play in terms of a connection to culture, kinship, land and family was highlighted during the Committee’s inquiry, as was the devastation to communities that results when language is lost. Indigenous languages are the foundation upon which the capacity to learn, interact and to shape identity is built.”

Read more at <http://apo.org.au/research/our-land-our-languages-language-learning-indigenous-communities>

9. SYMPOSIUM: APPROACHES TO RESEARCHING LANGUAGE AND IDENTITY

Friday 9 November, 2012, Sydney University

This FREE symposium is organised by the Language and Identity Research Network. All researchers and research students interested in linguistics and identity are welcome.

Featured Speakers: Anna De Fina (Georgetown University): *Narrative and identity: discourse perspectives*, and Janet Holmes (Victoria University of Wellington): *Researching social identity construction in workplace discourse*. To register and for more information:

http://sydney.edu.au/arts/research/language_and_identity/language_and_identity.shtml.

10. ACT EDUCATION DIRECTORATE ACTIVITIES SUPPORTING STUDENT ENGAGEMENT WITH LANGUAGES.

- ACT Secondary Students Japanese Speech Contest on Saturday 8 September at Amaroo School. This event was supported by the Embassy of Japan, the Japan Foundation and the ACT Education Directorate.
- Annual ACT Primary Schools Japanese Fun Day hosted by Campbell Primary School on Wednesday 5 September. Students and Japanese teachers from 7 schools attended and engaged in a day of language and cultural activities
- Spanish Speech Competition
- French Poetry Competition
- Students from 9 secondary schools were supported to attend Asia Pacific Day at the ANU on 10 August.
- Students from 7 secondary schools learning Indonesian will attend Indonesia Day at the ANU on 26 October

For more information about the above, please contact Kristina Collins, Curriculum Executive Officer Languages & Asia Literacy, on 6205 7164 or kristina.collins@act.gov.au

11. LINGUAELIVE: FREE WEB TOOL FOR TEACHERS TO CONNECT STUDENTS TO PRACTICE EACH OTHER'S LANGUAGES IN PEER TANDEMS.

LinguaeLive.ca allows any instructor to connect with colleagues teaching complementary language classes across the globe. These instructors can then link their students for peer-to-peer communication. This site is free and open to all, thanks to an SSHRC grant. LinguaeLive.ca can help students improve their language and cultural skills and make connections abroad.

For more information see www.linguaealive.ca and short YouTube videos at:

- Introductory Video: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8MGFaVTiSkQ>
- Instructional Video: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gRpkvuxLwwQ>
- Case Study: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y0EC-TIAy9A>

You can also contact admin@linguaealive.ca or Professor Jennifer Hosek at jhosek@queensu.ca

12 LANGUAGES PROMOTION AT THE NATIONAL MULTICULTURAL FESTIVAL

The ACT Bilingual Education Alliance (ACTBEA) will again have a Languages stall at the National Multicultural Festival – on Sunday 10 February 2013. This is a great way to publicise the benefits of language learning and provide information about where skills in various languages, including English, can be learned and developed in the ACT.

If you have information you would like displayed, or can volunteer to be at the stall for a while to talk to people about language learning, please contact ACTBEA at canberrabilingual@gmail.com

Other activities ACTBEA will be coordinating in 2013, with the help of an ACT Government Multi-cultural Grant include:

- Multilingual games and fun activities as part of the Children's Sanctuary at the National Multicultural Festival, Saturday 9 February 2013
- A Seminar for families raising children in more than one language in February or March 2013. This will provide expert and practical advice and support for parents, grandparents and carers as well as teachers and early childhood professionals who are involved in developing children's skills in more than one language.

13 CANBERRA: CONFERENCE CAPITAL 2013

a) Policies, Practices and Research in University Language and Culture Programs

Second biennial conference of the Languages and Cultures Network for Australian Universities (LCNAU): 3-5 July, 2013, Australian National University

An opportunity for language educators from across the country and the world to meet and discuss topics of critical importance and mutual interest, and to participate in LCNAU's establishment of a new national agenda for university languages.

Registration is FREE. For more details – including Call for Papers, see www.lcnau.org

b) Inspire, Innovate, Interact – biennial conference of the Australian Federation of Modern Language Teachers Associations Inc (AFMLTA): 5th-8th July. Keep an eye on <http://conference2013.afmlta.asn.au/> for more details

c) National Community Language Schools Conference will be hosted by the ACT Community Language Schools Association in late September or early October 2013. More details early next year

**FEEDBACK ON THESE UPDATES
AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO FUTURE UPDATES WELCOME**

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