



ANNUAL REPORT 2021

Multicultural Education and Languages Committee (MELC)

Report for the Minister for Education



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The Multicultural Education and Languages Committee (MELC)

Department for Education

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Introduction from the Chair



We are living in a tumultuous world characterised by international tensions and the growth of xenophobia, inequality, climate change and a pandemic. All the more pressing, then – indeed, imperative – is the need to develop understanding and the ability of people to live, learn and work well together, to share resources equitably and resolve problems. These things are now at a premium. Profound changes to communication and how knowledge and expertise are regarded add further dimensions to the complexity of our world. This complexity touches every aspect of students' learning and education.

The work of the Ministerial Advisory Committee: Multicultural Education and Languages (MELC) is designed to address the crucial need for education sectors and systems, leaders, teachers, parents, and communities to ensure that all children and young people learn

well and that they grow and develop in their engagement with and understanding of our dynamic world – a world with increasing linguistic and cultural diversity. How can this diversity be harnessed as a resource for learning for all? How do we ensure that vulnerabilities and inequalities are addressed? How do we work towards linguistic justice for all, especially knowing how much of our reality and knowledge and knowhow is enmeshed with language and cultures? It is these kinds of fundamental questions that the committee has worked with throughout the year.

In the past year we have engaged with the review of the Australian Curriculum, advising particularly on the Languages Curriculum and the intercultural capability. We have noted the proposed dilution of the kind of learning that is needed to address the challenges of our times. We have engaged with data and processes related to equity, seeking to spotlight a widening gap in student achievements. We have engaged with the internationalisation of education, issues pertaining to the workforce, and early learning.

In all our work, we have continued to highlight that the MELC agenda of strengthening authentic engagement with linguistic and cultural diversity touches not only all dimensions of education, all subject areas, all students and all schools, but also languages, multicultural education, and the internationalisation of education – the three named areas which are the focal areas of MELC's work.

There is much more to be done and this work is indeed challenging. By bringing together the knowledge and knowhow of the committee as we work increasingly collaboratively across all sectors, we have the basis for contributing in a responsive way to the demands of a changing societal, political, economic and educational world which necessitates urgent action. I offer my thanks to all members of the committee for their work, commitment and dedication. I also thank the three education sectors, the primary and secondary principals' associations, leaders and teachers, the universities and community organisations, professional associations and key stakeholders for their willingness to engage with us.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Scarino'.

Associate Professor Angela Scarino, Chair, MELC





The committee

Role and purpose

The MELC provides advice to the South Australian Minister for Education on 3 interrelated areas of education: languages education, multicultural education and the internationalisation of education. It works across the 3 schooling sectors and its work encompasses the Ethnic and Community Schools Languages Program.

In undertaking this work, the committee draws upon contemporary research, policy and practices available locally, nationally and internationally, and the knowledge, expertise and experience of committee members.

Though the work of MELC encompasses these three named areas, it needs to be recognised that the focus on linguistic and cultural diversity, which is the overarching theme of MELC's work, permeates all areas and dimensions of education, and as such it pertains to all learners, to all areas of learning and to all schools and early childhood settings.

The committee is supported by the Strategic Policy and External Relations Division of the Department for Education.

Terms of reference

The committee is responsible for providing advice to the Minister on:

- developing strategies for promoting, enhancing and strengthening languages education, including English as an additional language or dialect (EALD)
- developing understandings and practices in schools to:
 - engage children and young people with linguistic and cultural diversity
 - develop intercultural capabilities of children and young people to enable them to contribute as global citizens
- supporting schools to increase the number of students successfully studying a language
- supporting the maintenance and development of languages and cultures in all South Australian schools and ethnic and community schools
- expanding the capacity for ethnic and community language schools to provide SACE languages subjects
- developing models for the professional development of teachers of languages
- supporting the internationalisation of teaching and learning in South Australia
- other matters referred to it by the Minister.

MELC membership

Members of MELC (see Table 1) are appointed by the Minister for Education. Members are appointed on the basis of their knowledge and experience of multicultural education, languages education and the internationalisation of education. Associate Professor Angela Scarino has been the Chair of MELC from its inception in December 2015 and was Chair of the former MELC from 2013 to 2015.

Table 1: MELC members during 2021

Associate Professor Angela Scarino	Chairperson, independent
Ms Deonne Smith	Department for Education
Ms Teresa Cimmino	Catholic Education South Australia (CESA)
Mrs Deb Dalwood	Association of Independent Schools of South Australia (AISSA)
Ms Kayoko Enomoto	South Australian Vice-Chancellors Committee (SAVCC)
Ms Toni Cocchiaro OAM	South Australian Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs Commission (SAMEAC) January 2021 – December 2021
Mrs Khuyên (Quin) Tran	South Australian Multicultural Commission – December 2021
Associate Professor Harry Savelsberg	Multicultural Youth SA (MYSA)
Professor Martin Westwell	SACE Board of South Australia
Mr Darryl Buchanan	The Ethnic Schools Association of South Australia (ESASA)
Ms Lia Tedesco	Educational leader (Principal, Director)
Dr Michelle Kohler	Leading educator
Ms Samoda Silva	Student nominee
Ms Jasmine Millbanks	Early Childhood/Preschool Director
Ms Olga Kostic	Parent nominee
TBC	Aboriginal person
Mr Adireddy Yara	Community nominee

MELC secretariat

The committee's secretariat provides research, as well as administrative and organisational support. In 2021, secretarial support for MELC was 0.5 FTE. Ms Suzanne Bradshaw was the Executive Officer.





MELC meetings

Four meetings were held in 2021 (see Table 2). At each meeting representatives from a particular sector/organisation/community group are invited to present to the committee on the achievements and challenges in their particular context. This provides MELC members with the opportunity to experience firsthand the programs being run in the fields of languages education, multicultural education and the internationalisation of education. It also provides the opportunity to canvas diverse perspectives to enrich members' own understandings and enable the committee to better advise the Minister.

Reports from members are an important part of MELC's information-sharing processes. They provide a mechanism for keeping MELC up-to-date with what is happening in the sectors and organisations represented on the committee.

Table 2: MELC Meetings 2021

Date	Focus Areas	Presenter/s
23 March 2021	Early learning Venue: Cowandilla Children's Centre for Early Childhood Development and Parenting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ms Natalie Atkinson, Director Early Childhood Services, Strategy Development and Ms Asha Crozier, Early Childhood Leader Department for Education – Update on the Early Learning Strategy Ms Katrina Sexton, Principal of Cowandilla Primary School and Children's Centre for Early Childhood Development and Parenting
24 June 2021	Review of the Australian Curriculum F–10 Venue: Education Development Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ms Deonne Smith, Department for Education's response Ms Teresa Cimmino, CESA's response Ms Lia Tedesco – MELC's response from the subcommittee Mr Harry Passehl, Youth Parliament – Mandatory Language Education in South Australian High Schools
19 August 2021	Equity and Diversity Venue: AISSA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Associate Professor Harry Savelsberg, MYSA Mr Peter Mader, Chief Executive, South Australian Secondary Principals' Association (SASPA) Ms Bronwyn Milera, Aboriginal Education Directorate, Department for Education Ms Sandra Pattison, Manager Performance Reporting and Analytics, System Performance, Department for Education

4 November 2020	<p>SACE and Tertiary Languages programs</p> <p>Venue: Adelaide University</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professor Martin Westwell, SACE Board of South Australia – SACE Languages Data and Results of Languages Survey • Ms Kayoko Enomoto, University of Adelaide, Enrolment Trends in Languages Programs at Tertiary Level – presentation
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Meetings with the Minister

Two meetings are held with the Minister for Education each year for MELC to report on the progress of its agenda and to respond to Ministerial requests. During 2021 meetings were held on Tuesday 20 April and Tuesday 19 October.

Provision of policy, strategy and advice

One of the key focus areas in the MELC 2021 Workplan is contributing expertise and advice to the education sectors and to state and national policies and practices through the lens of catering for linguistic and cultural diversity.

During 2021, MELC provided advice in six areas as outlined below.

Review of the Australian Curriculum F–10

On 12 June 2020, the Education Council tasked the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) with undertaking a review of the Australian Curriculum for Foundation to Year 10 (F–10) to ensure it was still meeting the needs of students and providing clear guidance for teachers. It directed that ACARA would work in close consultation with the profession and key stakeholder groups to complete the review by 2022. In April 2021, the draft curriculum was released for public consultation.

The MELC welcomed the opportunity to contribute to the Review of the Australian Curriculum F–10.

The Review of the Australian Curriculum F–10 was the main focus of the MELC meeting held on Thursday 24 June 2021. At this meeting, to further inform members, the 3 education sectors were invited to present on their process of consultation and the main points of their feedback to ACARA.

The main focus of MELC's response was on the Languages learning area and the intercultural understanding capability, although MELC considered many aspects of the curriculum as a whole. The MELC's comments related mainly to the nature, rationale for and extent of change needed. The committee raised 8 areas of concern in the Languages learning area, namely:

- the brief and the revision process
- the conceptual framing of the Languages curriculum
- the generic approach to Languages curriculum design
- the cross-curriculum priority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures
- background students and entry points





- the introduction and rationale sections
- the development of a guide
- the Foundation level.

MELC's response was provided to the Minister for Education and to the schooling sectors and key professional associations.

Early learning

Early Learning was the focus of the MELC meeting held on 23 March 2021, which was held at the Cowandilla Children's Centre for Early Childhood Development and Parenting. At this meeting MELC invited Ms Natalie Atkinson, Director, Early Childhood Services, Strategy Development and Ms Asha Crozier, Early Childhood Leader, Department for Education to provide an update on the Department for Education's Early Learning Strategy. This provided an opportunity for members to gain a better understanding of the strategy and to provide further feedback to the department through the lens of linguistic and cultural diversity.

Ms Katrina Sexton, Principal of Cowandilla Primary School and Children's Centre for Early Childhood Development and Parenting, provided an overview of the site and its programs, highlighting a whole-of-school approach to developing the staff and students' understandings of and ability to engage with linguistic and cultural diversity. She emphasised that, to do this, it is important to understand the linguistic and cultural profile of the school and its community, and the richness it provides.

Equity and diversity

The MELC has been keen to re-examine what equity and diversity might mean in education in contemporary times. Although the question of equity touches the whole of education, there are particular intersection points with the work of MELC. Furthermore, linguistic and cultural diversity is not isolated from all of the other diversities; rather, they intersect.

At the MELC meeting held on 17 August 2021 at AISSA, a number of key people were invited to present on this topic and to pose some questions to the committee on what it can do in this space.

Associate Professor Harry Savelsberg, MYSA, provided an overview of MYSA programs related to equity and education, equity and employment, and equity of transition support. He gave a sense of intervention through different kinds of programs designed to galvanise and provide the supports required. He also described the consequences of policy silos, which don't allow work on issues in an integrated and holistic way.

Mr Peter Mader, Chief Executive, SASPA signalled policy and programs as intervention points.

Ms Bronwyn Milera, Aboriginal Education Directorate, Department for Education provided an overview of the Aboriginal Education Strategy and the key initiatives stemming from the strategy, particularly the strategies to raise achievement levels of Aboriginal children and young people. The MELC is very interested in the teaching and learning of Aboriginal languages as the holders of Aboriginal cultures and knowledges.

Ms Sandra Pattison, Manager Performance Reporting and Analytics, System Performance, Department for Education, provided an overview of data collection by the Department for Education, the kind of analyses it routinely undertakes, and how the data is used to inform strategy development.

The presentations provided members with an appreciation of the complexity of this area and valuable information upon which to draw.

The SACE and tertiary language programs

The interface between the SACE and tertiary language programs was the focus of the MELC meeting held on Thursday 4 November 2021.

Professor Martin Westwell, Chief Executive, SACE Board of South Australia, presented statistics on the number of completed Stage 2 language enrolments between 2011 and 2020 and a selection of student responses to a languages survey conducted by the SACE Board. Ms Kayoko Enomoto, University of Adelaide, presented on enrolment trends in Languages programs at tertiary level which revealed the paucity of data on this topic.

Languages Strategy

At the November MELC meeting, Mr Ken Lountian, Director Curriculum Policy and Standards, Department for Education, provided a brief overview of the planned work on the Department for Education's strategies for Languages.

Digital Strategy

During 2021 MELC established subcommittees that provided advice to the Department for Education's Digital Strategy team and Workforce Strategy team through the lens of linguistic and cultural diversity. The MELC looks forward to its continued involvement in the process.

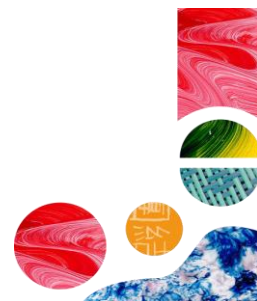
Discussion forums

The MELC establishes and maintains relationships with a wide range of educational and community organisations, building partnerships with them to strengthen contemporary understandings and practices in relation to linguistic and cultural diversity.

Inviting high-level speakers to discussion forums with the key stakeholders is a mechanism through which MELC seeks to advance educational discussion and debate and formulate advice to the Minister in the focal areas of education. To this end, MELC invited lead thinkers to contribute to the committee's discussions and to educational forums with key stakeholders.

Linguistic and Cultural Diversity in Early Learning

On 8 June MELC hosted a discussion forum examining early learning through the lens of linguistic and cultural diversity. The forum brought together early learning educators, academics, consultants/advisers from the 3 education sectors, representatives from professional associations and MELC members for discussion on this very important topic. The keynote presenter was Joseph Lo Bianco, Professor Emeritus in Language and Literacy Education at the Graduate School of Education, University of Melbourne.





Professor Lo Bianco provided an introductory presentation, Languages in Early Childhood Education: Global Evidence and Lessons. Professor Lo Bianco shared his international research related to this theme, and in particular, his recently completed review on early childhood and languages commissioned by the Victorian Department for Education. He invited participants to think about the importance of play-based education in child language acquisition and second language learning and how to maximise opportunities for children to speak and to use the target language in play. He encouraged early learning educators to explore the language ecology of their community, to provide children with opportunities to be involved in places where the language is used. He reminded participants that young learners are capable of sophisticated reflections on language.

Following the keynote address there were a series of presentations from the 3 schooling sectors, the Preschool Directors Association and practitioners discussing how they take account of linguistic and cultural diversity in early learning in their particular contexts. They provided us with rich examples of practice from their sites.

The discussion forum provided an opportunity for participants to reflect on early learning in our state and to think deeply about how best to work with the linguistic and cultural repertoires that children bring to their learning.



'Fairer Schools for a Fairer Society – Equity and Diversity Forum

On 16 November 2021, MELC in conjunction with SASPA and the South Australian Primary Principals Association (SAPPA) hosted a discussion forum examining equity and diversity in education in contemporary times.

The purpose of the forum was to reanimate discussion on equity and diversity in education in order to explore what equity might mean in contemporary times, particularly in the context of the Alice Springs (Mparntwe)

Education Declaration. That document foregrounds equity and excellence and how school leaders, teachers and communities might attend to equity and diversity in their policies and practice.

A panel of education experts were invited to present their views on these matters. The panel comprised Professor Alan Reid, Professor Emeritus of Education at the University of South Australia; Professor Joseph (Joe) Lo Bianco, Professor Emeritus in Language and Literacy Education at the Graduate School of Education, University of Melbourne; Ms Carly Jia, Senior Adviser, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education, Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership; Mr Ross Fox, Director, Catholic Education – Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn; Mr Peter Mader, Chief Executive, SASPA; and Ms Angela Falkenberg, President, SAPPA.

More than 40 educators participated in the event including principals, directors and school leaders; key personnel from AISSA, CESA, and the Department for Education; academics from The University of Adelaide, Flinders University and The University of South Australia, including all 3 deans/heads of education; and key stakeholders and MELC members.

Associate Professor Angela Scarino, Chair, MELC, set the context for the day by discussing the role of languages and cultures in learning.





Professor Alan Reid provided an overview of the history of equity in education and how a critical examination of the trajectory of the concept can be so very illuminating. He advocated for a new more holistic concept of equity and a deeper, shared understanding of what excellence means. He supported:



- a commitment to using the Alice Springs Declaration as the reference point for policy and practice
- the need for systems and schools to work together to develop and refine understandings about what equity in education means
- the need to develop, implement and evaluate policies and practices to enhance equity through
 - the redistribution of material and cultural resources
 - the recognition of the cultural histories and practices of diverse groups
 - representation in governing decisions and in design of institutional practice – of all groups subjected to the effects of these decisions and practices.

Ms Carly Jia spoke about a project for the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership that aims to support the improved cultural competency of teachers and school leaders. She stressed the importance of relationship-building between teachers and communities and the need for schools to be brave and bold in this area. Ms Jia reminded participants of the importance of understanding Aboriginal cultural knowledge and ways of knowing.

Mr Peter Mader spoke of equity as a systemic challenge. He saw policy as a major lever for improvement in equity and excellence.

Mr Ross Fox spoke of the importance of a deliberate focus on learning, the role of knowledge and the crucial nature of teachers' work as the starting points for addressing equity issues.

Ms Angela Falkenberg spoke of equity in terms of the need to build inclusive practices and the importance of knowing your students, their families and the community. She spoke of the importance of differentiation and the need for 'bespoke' work in this area. She posed the question of what equity leadership looks like and introduced the notion of 'equitification', highlighting that it is procedural.

Professor Lo Bianco examined some of the conceptual challenges and problems, such as the concept of difference being seen as optional or additional to the core, and reductive understandings of the role and impact of identity and lived experience. He stressed the need for 'deep dialogue' in this area and suggested a facilitated symposium to develop a vision of equity for the state.

All participants engaged in discussion, sharing perspectives and expertise from their sectors.

Participants left the forum with a strong understanding of the value of a renewed focus on matters of equity in schools and in particular the need to prioritise Aboriginal education.

Ministerial Award for Leadership in Languages and Culture

The Ministerial Award for Leadership in Languages and Cultures is provided by MELC on behalf of the Minister. It is administered by the Australia Day Council of South Australia (ADCSA) and presented at the Australia Day Awards ceremony each year. The award has 2 categories.

Category 1: – A high school student

This award is designed to promote the study of languages and the development of intercultural capabilities. It is awarded to a high school student who has shown outstanding commitment to their study of languages and cultures at school, and who seeks to advocate for a multilingual and culturally diverse Australia by fostering engagement in linguistic and cultural diversity.

Criteria:

- Has sound capability in more than one language
- Shows outstanding commitment to the study of languages and cultures
- Demonstrates effective intercultural capabilities
- Fosters engagement in linguistic and cultural diversity within the school and/or the broader community

Category 2: A young person aged 24 years or less

Awarded to a young person who has demonstrated outstanding commitment to advocacy for a multilingual and culturally diverse Australia and strong community leadership.

Criteria:

- Shows commitment to advocacy for a multilingual and culturally diverse Australia
- Demonstrates outstanding community leadership and effective communication skills
- Demonstrates sound capability in more than one language and the ability to operate successfully in linguistic and culturally diverse environments

Nominations are received from August to November each year. Candidates must be nominated by another person or a group, such as a community organisation or school. The selection panel comprises representatives from MELC and ADCSA. An independent person may also be coopted to the panel at the discretion of MELC and ADCSA. The award is announced and presented at a ceremony held at Government House in January each year.

The award winner assumes an ambassadorial role for MELC, with award recipients being invited to MELC meetings and MELC events.





Ms Samoda Silva; Ms Jasmine Kaur; the Hon Hue Van Le, Governor of South Australia; Ms Thuyen Ha; and Mr Wathnak Ha at the Australia Day Awards at Government House on 18 January 2021

Award for Leadership in Languages and Cultures: Category 1

Recipient – Ms Samoda Silva - Commendation – Ms Jasmine Kaur

Samoda has demonstrated excellence and outstanding commitment to the study of languages and cultures, including English, Italian, Sinhala, Japanese and Auslan. She attended the Sinhala Buddhist School from reception to year 10.

Samoda is an active contributor to her school as well as the local and broader community. She hosts prerecorded and live television shows on *Vishwavahini TV* (Melbourne) including a weekly news segment from Adelaide, and also hosts *Lama Mandapaya*, a children's program in Sinhala on Radio Adelaide. Previously she has hosted a monthly segment in Sinhala about Adelaide news, *Rupavavini*, on Sri Lankan National television.

Samoda is an exemplary role model for young people of Sri Lankan origin living in South Australia. She generously volunteers her time welcoming children of Sri Lankan background and supporting them to settle into their local community.

Commitment to the study of languages and cultures at junior secondary level

Mr David Perry, Pulteney Grammar School and Ms Farimah Goharipourfard, Glenunga International High School were recognised at the Australia Day Awards ceremony at a Government House event for their commitment to the study of languages and cultures at junior secondary level.

Award for Leadership in Languages and Cultures – Category 2

Mr Wathnak Vy – recipient - Ms Thuyen Ha – commendation

Wathnak migrated to South Australia from Cambodia, was a student at Woodville High School and has achieved a double degree in Bachelor of Social Sciences and Bachelor of International Development at The University of Adelaide.

While at university, Wathnak created the Multicultural Mental Health Group. This group now has more than 700 members, all of whom volunteer their time to provide peer support in helping international students feel a sense of belonging within their local community. This was a particularly important support group in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic. Wathnak has been leading the way in creating new initiatives that respond to mental health issues faced by young people from linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds.





Appendix A MELC subcommittees

Award for Leadership in Languages and Cultures selection panel

Purpose: to provide advice in relation to this award

- Ms Samoda Silva
- Mr Adireddy Yara
- Ms Kayoko Enomoto
- Ms Suzanne Bradshaw, Executive Officer, MELC (Chair)

Curriculum

Purpose: to provide advice, as appropriate, on curriculum matters, particularly in relation to the Review of the Australian Curriculum

- Ms Lia Tedesco (Chair)
- Ms Deonne Smith
- Ms Teresa Cimmino
- Ms Kayoko Enomoto
- Dr Michelle Kohler
- Associate Professor Angela Scarino
- Ms Suzanne Bradshaw, Executive Officer, MELC

Digital Learning

Purpose: to provide advice, as appropriate, in relation to the Department for Education's Digital Learning Strategy

- Ms Kayoko Enomoto
- Ms Samoda Silva
- Ms Teresa Cimmino
- Associate Professor Angela Scarino
- Ms Suzanne Bradshaw, Executive Officer, MELC

Early Learning

Purpose: to provide advice, as appropriate, in relation to matters relating to early learning through the lens of linguistic and cultural diversity

- Associate Professor Angela Scarino, Chair
- Ms Jasmine Millbanks
- Ms Suzanne Bradshaw, Executive Officer, MELC

Equity and Diversity

Purpose: to provide advice, as appropriate, in relation to matters relating to equity and diversity with respect to linguistic and cultural diversity

- Associate Professor Angela Scarino (Chair)
- Mrs Deb Dalwood

- Ms Toni Cocchiaro
- Ms Suzanne Bradshaw, Executive Officer, MELC

Languages Strategies

Purpose: to provide advice, as appropriate, in relation to the development of the Languages strategies and implementation plans

- Associate Professor Angela Scarino (Chair)
- Ms Lia Tedesco
- Mr Darryl Buchanan
- Ms Suzanne Bradshaw, Executive Officer, MELC
- Ms Deonne Smith – Department for Education representative

Parent Engagement

Purpose: to provide advice, as appropriate, in relation to the implementation of the Department for Education's Parent Engagement Strategy through the lens of linguistic and cultural diversity

- Associate Professor Angela Scarino, Chair
- Associate Professor Harry Savelsberg
- Ms Jasmine Millbanks
- Ms Suzanne Bradshaw, Executive Officer, MELC

Workforce Strategy

Purpose: to provide advice, as appropriate, in relation to the development of the Department for Education's Workforce Strategy through the lens of linguistic and cultural diversity

- Associate Professor Angela Scarino (Chair)
- Ms Lia Tedesco
- Ms Suzanne Bradshaw, Executive Officer, MELC

The School of Languages Council – MELC representative

Purpose: to represent MELC at School of Languages Council meetings

- Mr Adireddy Yara