



ANNUAL REPORT 2022

Multicultural Education and Languages Committee (MELC)

Report for the Minister for Education, Training and Skills



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The Multicultural Education and Languages Committee (MELC)

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Introduction from the Chair



As I consider the work of the Ministerial Advisory Committee: Multicultural Education and Languages Committee (MELC) in 2022, I reflect on both the committee's achievements and its learnings. I do so in a period of challenge; we are experiencing the lingering pandemic, global tensions and conflicts, the impact of climate change, and increasing inequalities, all of which impact in different ways on young peoples' sense of wellbeing in the world.

Looking back, the committee has made substantive contributions to the Review of the Australian Curriculum – particularly in Languages and the development of intercultural capability– arguing for a much more expanded conception of learning than the national curriculum work has yielded. In the early learning space, the committee has highlighted the needs and desires of children, young people and

families, in all their diversity. It has continued to advocate strongly for languages learning – all languages – in a context where this learning area holds an increasingly precarious position in the schooling landscape. And most importantly for Australia at the present time and the desired process of reconciliation, the committee has advocated for the teaching and learning of Aboriginal languages. It has also continued to strongly support provision for English as an additional language or dialect (EALD), which is intended to address the learning of English on the part of children and young people who come to education with home languages other than English. Some members of the committee contributed to the drafting of the Multicultural Charter, and the committee as a whole made an important contribution to consultation processes related to its development. Further, the Chair represented MELC at the stakeholder roundtable forums of the South Australian Royal Commission on Early Childhood Education and Care.

In all its work, the committee has continued to advance the view that language(s) and culture(s) are prime resources in mediating learning for all students. In this sense, the work of MELC supports education in the context of linguistic and cultural roles, impacting not only on the learning and wellbeing of children and young people who come to South Australian education from elsewhere, but on the learning and wellbeing of all learners as they learn to live in and act upon a dynamic and diverse world. All students benefit from the possibilities afforded by a multiplicity of perspectives and meanings within and across languages and cultures. This view is much more than just a fascination of linguistic and cultural comparison. Rather, it recognises the multiplicity and diversity of meanings and invites participation in the deep exchange of meanings, knowledge, understandings that enable children and young people to act upon and change the world.

I wish to thank all members of the committee for their commitment and dedication. Their work together and with many groups and agencies has been exemplary in working towards linguistic and social justice.

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 Community Languages Schools SA 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 3 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 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 community languages 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

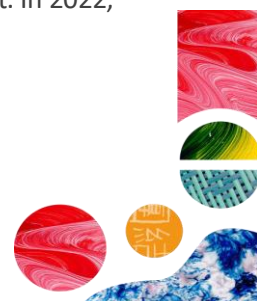
Members of MELC (see Table 1) are appointed by the Minister for Education. Members are appointed based on their knowledge and experience of multicultural education, languages education and the internationalisation of education. Associate Professor Angela Scarino has been the Chair of MELC from its inception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

Table 1: MELC members during 2022

| | |
|---|--|
| 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) |
| Mrs Khuynh (Quin) Tran | South Australian Multicultural Commission |
| Associate Professor Harry Savelsberg | Multicultural Youth SA (MYSA) |
| Professor Martin Westwell | SACE Board of South Australia (until March 2022) |
| Ms Natalie Hamood | SACE Board of South Australia July 2022 |
| Mr Darryl Buchanan | Community Language Schools SA (until September 2022) |
| 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 |
| Mr Gregory McCulloch | Aboriginal person July 2022 |
| Mr Adireddy Yara | Community nominee |

MELC secretariat

The committee's secretariat provides research, as well as administrative and organisational support. In 2022, secretarial support for MELC was 0.5 FTE. Ms Suzanne Bradshaw was the Executive Officer.





MELC meetings

At each MELC meeting representatives from a particular sector/organisation/community group are invited to present to the committee on the achievements and challenges of their work. 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.

Four meetings were held in 2022 (see Table 2).

Table 2: MELC Meetings 2022

| Date | Focus Areas | Presenter/s |
|----------------|--|--|
| 17 March 2022 | MELC Workplan Venue: Online | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mr Lian Coyles, Manager, Governmental Relations and Policy, Department for Education – International Education Strategy |
| 26 May 2022 | Policy and Strategy Advice Venue: Hybrid mode – CESA and online | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ms Teresa Cimmino, CESA |
| 18 August 2022 | Policy and Strategy Advice Venue: Department for Education | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hon Blair Boyer, Minister for Education, Skills and Employment Ms Kellis Dare Lawrie, 2022 recipient of the Ministerial Award for Leadership in Languages and Cultures, Ernabella Anangu School Ms Lia Tedesco – Response to the Review of the Australian Curriculum Dr Michelle Kohler – Considering Senior Secondary Languages: How does SA compare? Ms Dashielle Allain – Early Learning Project interim report |

| | | |
|-------------------------------|--|--|
| <p>3 November 2022</p> | <p>SA Multicultural Charter</p> <p>Venue: Multicultural Youth SA</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms Adriana Christopoulos, Chair, SA Multicultural Commission • Ms Tamara Stewart-Jones CEO, MYSA • Dr Helena de Anstiss, MYSA and Associate Professor Harry Savelsberg – Parent Engagement Research Project • Ms Kayoko Enomoto, University of Adelaide, Enrolment trends in Languages programs at tertiary level |
|-------------------------------|--|--|





Provision of policy, strategy and advice

One of the key focus areas in the MELC 2022 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 2022, MELC provided advice in 5 areas as outlined below.

The draft South Australian Multicultural Charter

MELC members considered the draft South Australian Multicultural Charter (the draft Charter) at a discussion with Ms Adriana Christopoulos, Chair of the SA Multicultural Commission at its meeting on 3 November 2022. The MELC provided the SA Multicultural Commission with a statement outlining the feedback from its members, which was endorsed by the committee.

Feedback was provided in the following areas: languages, cultures and knowledges, multiculturalism and interculturalism; diversity; diversity as a resource; language of the Charter; wellness and wellbeing; implementation.

The statement was provided to the Minister for Education.

The MELC welcomed the opportunity to provide comment on the draft Charter.

Review of the Australian Curriculum F–10

During 2021 MELC provided a response to the Review of the Australian Curriculum for Foundation – Year 10 (F–10). 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 response was provided to the Minister for Education and to the schooling sectors and key professional associations.

During 2022, MELC considered the draft curricula that were out for consultation, namely German, Indonesian, Korean, Modern Greek and Spanish.

Ms Lia Tedesco, Chair – MELC Curriculum sub-committee, wrote to Mr David de Carvalho, Chief Executive Officer, ACARA informing him that the MELC's position on the draft curricula out for consultation was reflected in the response it provided in the previous year, as each of the concerns and recommendations outlined in that response still stood.

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

Early learning

During 2022, MELC commissioned an advice paper on Languages and early learning. The aim of this advice paper was to explore aspects of languages learning in early learning settings and investigate the use of the Early Learning Languages Australia (ELLA) app as well as other languages learning practices in the SA context.

Following review and synthesis of current research literature related to early-start language acquisition, consultations were conducted with key stakeholders, including those at the forefront of the provision of early childhood languages education. This included educators and educational officers from across the 3 educational

sectors: The Department for Education, CESA and AISSA. The paper considers the research in the light of current policy and government initiatives and reveals insights into what is currently happening in local early childhood languages learning initiatives, programs, and experiences.

Through this process, 3 key themes were established:

- Theme 1 – A vital need for a naturalistic and holistic approach to early-start languages education
- Theme 2 – Needs and issues related to policy and practice implementation and integration of languages education
- Theme 3 – Opportunities and challenges in using the ELLA app.

Current research and the firsthand perspectives of those who work in fields related to early childhood languages learning highlights that there are many advantages of languages learning in the first 5 years of childhood. This investigation revealed the increasing recognition that bilingualism holds benefits – developmental, educational and social, including wellbeing. As the evidence suggests, early-start bilingualism (at ages 0–5), including learning home languages and additional languages, is beneficial for positive early learning experiences, successful English outcomes and achieving a sense of community and belonging. In the area of languages curriculum and pedagogy, a much-needed paradigm shift is emerging towards taking a multilingual and intercultural stance in language teaching and learning. Yet, implementing and integrating such multilingual and intercultural languages learning initiatives, programs and experiences involves considering the range of needs, issues and opportunities identified in this investigation.

MELC members have provided feedback on the draft advice paper.

Expanding understanding in EALD

Background

In November 2019, MELC hosted a visit by Professor Constant Leung, Department of Education and Professional Studies, King's College London. The visit included: an EALD Forum; a public lecture; a meeting with the Minister for Education and dedicated sessions with the 3 schooling sectors.

Feedback from participants in the various activities indicated a clear need to strengthen and reinvigorate approaches to EALD. It also called for the provision of more opportunities for key educators, teachers and leaders to work together across sectors with leading experts, such as Professor Leung, to expand understandings of the latest research in the field and to discuss contemporary approaches and practices to EALD in school education.

The MELC was commended by all participants for facilitating this cross-sectoral discussion forum;. Sector representatives appreciated the rare opportunity to speak with such an expert in EALD in both formal and informal settings.

Professor Leung indicated interest in continuing to work with educators in South Australia to strengthen provision of EALD in a strategic way.

A subsequent visit was proposed to build on the interest generated by the successful 2019 visit. However, this was delayed due to the restrictions on international travel and in-person gatherings imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic.





To determine specific needs in extending the knowledge base and understandings of EALD for key educators in the field, a consultation forum was organised. The roundtable discussion, held on 22 June 2022, brought together teachers, leaders and education advisory officers from each of the 3 education sectors to discuss the most pertinent issues and areas of need from the perspective of their contexts, and the best processes for the project.

The discussion focused on 3 key questions:

1. What are the issues related to provision of EALD support in schools that should be addressed through this project?
2. Who should be involved?
3. How should the project be organised?

Overwhelmingly, the roundtable attendees agreed that there remains a need for further contemporary professional learning for EALD educators, leaders and officers involved in the provision of EALD support in schools. Attendees also provided advice on the proposed professional learning project involving Professor Leung.

Education sector heads

Associate Professor Angela Scarino, Chair MELC attended the Education Sectors Heads meeting held on Wednesday 10 August 2022. The following is an abstract of Associate Professor Scarino's presentation:

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.

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.

Award for Leadership in Languages and Cultures: Category 1

Recipient – Ms Kellis Dare Lawrie

Kellis speaks 3 languages, English, Mirning and Pitjantjatjara, which she is also studying as a SACE subject. She is a strong advocate for female empowerment in community and the important role of education.





In 2020 Kellis was a winner of the Country to Canberra Leadership competition for young women living in rural and remote areas of Australia. She shared the complexities of living remote, living within 2 worlds and the impact of culture on her as a young Aboriginal woman. She has also worked alongside a bilingual literacy project as an illustrator to create a book to support the learning of Pitjantjatjara phonics for young children.

Commendations

- Ms Mehnaz Hussaini, Thebarton Senior College and School of Languages
- Ms Krystal Zhong, Unley High School

Award for Leadership in Languages and Cultures – Category 2

Recipient - Ms Zainab Kazemi

Ms Kazemi is a volunteer at the Afghan Association of South Australia where she helps new arrivals adapt to life in Australia. She promotes Afghan culture through the media and by organising numerous community events and fundraising activities.

Commendation

Mr Oscar Zi Shao Ong, University of Adelaide



*Left: Ms Kellis Dare-Lewis, recipient of the Award for Leadership in Languages and Cultures – Category 2
Right: Ms Mehnaz Hussaini, Ms Zainab Kazemi and Ms Krystal Zhong at the Australia Day Awards Ceremony.*

Appendix A MELC subcommittees

Award for Leadership in Languages and Cultures

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

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)
- Mrs Deborah Dalwood
- Ms Jasmine Millbanks
- Ms Suzanne Bradshaw, Executive Officer, MELC

International Education Strategy – Department for Education

Purpose: to provide advice, as appropriate, in relation to the Department for Education's International Education Strategy and Implementation Plan

- Associate Professor Angela Scarino (Chair)
- Ms Quin Tran
- Dr Michelle Kohler
- Ms Samoda Silva
- 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