

ANNUAL REPORT 2025

Multicultural Education and Languages Committee (MELC)

Report for the Minister for Education, Training and Skills

Government of South Australia

OFFICIAL

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The Multicultural Education and Languages Committee (MELC)

Department for Education

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Introduction from the Chair



I am pleased to present the 2025 Multicultural Education and Languages Committee (MELC) Annual Report. In looking towards 2026 it is worth reflecting on key highlights of MELC's work and its contributions during the past year.

The Multicultural Education and Languages Committee (MELC) provides an important role as a ministerial advisory committee responsible for providing advice to the South Australian Minister for Education, Training and Skills and Minister for Police on the interrelated areas of languages education, multicultural education and the internationalisation of education.

MELC finalised a significant project to address the declining number of enrolments in students studying a language in South Australia. The MELC Language paper will provide ongoing advice to the Minister for Education, Training and Skills on recommended strategies to improve the profile of languages learning and the number of students studying a language.

The project involved community consultation and additional meetings with sector heads, language teacher association and students from secondary and tertiary levels.

Martin Westwell CE Department of Education, Dr Angela Scarino Associate Professor University of SA and Professor Dr Peter Mickan University of Adelaide addressed MELC at their meetings as part of the consultation process.

The MELC Award for Leadership in Languages and Cultures is provided by the Minister, through the Multicultural Education and Languages Committee (MELC) and administered by Australia Day Council of South Australia (ADC SA). The award celebrates young people who build intercultural understanding across SA.

Chair's Diary

I attended the following functions in my capacity as Chair of MELC in 2025

- January 9 Planning meeting with Helen Patriarca and Anna Hambour
- January 26 Attendance at Australia Day Council Multicultural Parade
- February 6 Meeting re Office for Early Years
- February 13 MELC Paper Subcommittee meeting
- February 19 Meeting Professor Peter Mikan
- February 20 MELC Meeting 1
- February 26 Pinnacle College Dux Assembly Guest Speaker
- February 27 Attendance at SA Department for Education Leaders Day
- February 27 Meeting with Australia Day Council re MELC Award
- March 4 Meeting Queen Mangkubumi of Yogyakarta Indonesia
- March 6 Meeting at Department of Education for MELC Paper
- March 7 Commissioner for Children and Young People Seminar
- March 14 Speaker Italian Teachers Association 50 Year Celebration
- March 16 IFTAR Dinner Community Leaders – Hilton Hotel
- March 17 IFTAR Dinner Muslim Community- Salisbury SA
- March 24 Student IFTAR Dinner- Prospect SA
- March 28 Meeting Helen Patriarca
- April 4 Meeting with Minster's Office re consultation process for MELC Paper
- April 10 MELC languages Paper subcommittee discussion
- May 15 MELC Meeting 2
- May 19 Meeting with Hon Minster Blair Boyer MP (online)
- May 21 Meeting Australia day Council re MELC Awards
- May 27 Modern Language Teachers of SA online conference – Addressing MELC Language paper
- June 3 Meeting Professor Martin Westwell CE Department for Education re MELC Paper
- June 17 MELC Paper Subcommittee meeting (online)
- July 7 Meeting Australia day Council re MELC Awards
- July 11-13 Attended AFMLTA Australian Federation of Modern Language Teacher associations conference
- August 21 Meeting CLSSA CEO Brett Shuttleworth
- August 21 MELC Meeting 3
- October 11 Meeting with Jason Bensen and Anna Hambour re MELC Officer position
- September 11 Guest speaker Pinnacle College Assembly
- Sept 24-28 Speaker and panelist at UN Sustainable Goals Conference New York (self-funded)
- 3 October Classical Education Conference Pier Hotel Glenelg
- 23 October Pinnacle College 50 Year anniversary celebration attended by the Minister.
- 31 October Hellenic Studies Foundation National Educators Forum
- 25 November Official Signing of CLSSA agreement for Norwood International High Language Learning Hub

With the committee completing its second-year term, an expression of interest campaign called late in the year sought candidates to join the committee in 2025. On behalf of MELC I thank the following departing members:

The MELC remains committed and active in its aim to strengthen the profile and uptake of languages. Creating opportunities for children and young people to develop linguistic and intercultural capabilities will help South Australians to engage across diverse languages and cultures and contribute as global citizens.

The Committee acknowledges the support of its collaborative partners to share knowledge, expertise and perspectives to help achieve MELC's functions.

Mr Noel Mifsud

Noel Mifsud

Chair, MELC

The committee

Role and purpose

The MELC provides advice to the South Australian Minister for Education, Training and Skills on three interrelated areas of education including languages education, multicultural education, and the internationalisation of education, and has a strong focus on linguistic and cultural diversity and wellbeing. The committee works across the three schooling sectors, the university sector, and the community language schools (encompassing the Community Language Schools SA program) to ensure its work permeates across all learners.

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.

The Strategic Policy and External Relations Division within the Department for Education provides support for the MELC.

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 too:
    - 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

MELC membership is for two-year terms, with appointments made by the Minister for Education, Training and Skills, based on a candidate's knowledge and experience across the committee's three core areas of focus. Members may be reappointed at the end of each term at the Minister's discretion. MELC membership for 2025 is at Table 1 below.

Table 1: Membership to 31 December 2025

Senior Policy Officer Support

- Helen Patriarca
- Jason Benson

Members

- Mr Noel Mifsud – Chairperson
- Mr Rod Nancarrow – Department for Education
- Ms Teresa Cimmino – Catholic Education South Australia (CESA)
- Ms Deborah Dalwood – The Association of Independent Schools of South Australia (AISSA)
- Associate Professor Kayoko Enomoto – The South Australian Vice-Chancellor's Committee (SAVCC)
- Mr Hussain Razaiat – SA Multicultural Affairs Commission (SAMC)
- Dr Irene Zinonos – Community Language Schools SA (CLSSA)
- Ms Sally Letcher – SACE Board of South Australia
- Ms Tamara Stewart-Jones – Multicultural Youth SA (MYSA)
- Mr Ian Lamb – Office for Early Childhood Development (OECD)
- Ms Jacqueline Ferraro – education leader
- Ms Meredith Beck – expert educator
- Ms Samoda Silva – student representative
- Ms Truphena Mahindu – parent representative
- Ms Tamia Blackwell – Aboriginal and or Torres Strait Islander representative
- Mr Fida Hussain – community representative
- Ms Sriyani Mitchell – early childhood/preschool leader

MELC meetings

MELC meetings are held four times a year to discuss topics relevant to the committee's core areas of focus. The committee aims to foster collaborative and informative discussions, while also providing an opportunity to build effective relationships with key stakeholders through the sharing of information about significant programs and activities that the organisations have been involved in.

These meetings are an 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. In 2025, MELC held four core meetings (Table 2).

Table 2: MELC Meetings 2025

Meeting	Focus area	Venue
20 February	• MELC Workplan 2024-2025 • MELC Terms of Reference discussion • Improving Languages Education – a Multicultural Education and Languages Committee position paper	Department for Education
May 15	• Address to MELC Committee by Professor Peter Mickan on MELC Language Paper	Department for Education
Special Meeting July 22	• Address to MELC Committee by Professor Martin Westwell on MELC Language Paper	University of Adelaide
August 21	• SACE Subject Renewal – Sally Letcher • MELC Workplan 2025-2026	University of Adelaide
November 13	• MELC Language Paper Implementation Plan	University of Adelaide

Provision of policy, strategy, and advice

One of the key focus areas in the MELC 2024-2025 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 2025, MELC provided advice in areas as outlined below

Languages strategies and policy

Proposed amendments to the **Education and Children's Services Act 2019** (the Act) and associated regulations. These changes aim to help the Government address issues where children are not enrolled in or attending school following a Request from Minister Boyer.

Inquiry into **Building Asia Capability in Australia** through the education system and beyond. The House Standing Committee on Education adopted an inquiry into building Asia capability in Australia through the education system and beyond on 22 September 2025, following a referral from the Minister for Education, Hon Jason Clare MP.

Ministerial Award for Leadership in Languages and Culture

In 2025, MELC recognised its recipients of the annual ministerial Award for Leadership in Languages and Cultures. This is an annual award provided by MELC on behalf of the Minister for Education, Training and Skills which recognises a young person for their leadership, advocacy and commitment to a multilingual and culturally rich society and is administered by the Australia Day Council of South Australia (ADCSA) at the Australia Day Citizen of the Year Awards ceremony each year at Government House.

Appendix A: Sub-committees 2025

MELC Award for Leadership in Languages and Cultures Subcommittee

Purpose: to serve on the selection panel and provide advice in relation to this award.

Committee Reps: Kyoko Enomoto and Noel Mifsud

Languages Strategies

Purpose*:* to research and prepare an advisory paper for the Minister for Education, Training and Skills on the current landscape of languages learning particularly around enrolment numbers at secondary school level and looking at ways forward that may improve the uptake and profile of language learning.

Committee Reps: Meredith Beck (Chair), Noel Mifsud, Truphena Mahindu , Sally Letcher, Samoda Silva, Kayoko Enomoto, Teresa Cimmino, Helen Patriarca

And Miriam Parsons (Department for Education).

Appendix B: Other forums with MELC representation

The School of Languages Council – MELC representative

MELC is represented by the School of Languages Council.

Committee Reps: Meredith Beck