

Teaching Indigenous languages

- 5.1 As discussed in the previous chapter, schools are a resource and a venue for whole communities. They are a place where families, teachers and children come together in a learning environment. Teachers, Assistant Teachers, Cultural Advisors and other community members have been and continue to be vital ingredients in the teaching of Indigenous languages and culture and in the broader education of children in Indigenous communities.
- 5.2 This chapter discusses the training and qualifications required to teach Indigenous languages and the career and accreditation pathways available to Indigenous language teachers. The Committee discusses the important role Indigenous language teachers play in the classroom, especially in schools with high numbers of Indigenous students with EAL/D needs, and the need to attract and retain Indigenous language teachers. The Committee discusses EAL/D and cultural training required by teachers.

Career and accreditation pathways for Indigenous language teachers

Indigenous language teaching courses

- 5.3 The availability of training for qualifications to teach Indigenous languages is scattered across the country and is offered at a variety of Certificate, Degree, Diploma and Masters levels.
- 5.4 Examples of Certificate level courses in Indigenous languages are:
- In South Australia, the Murray Bridge TAFE offers Certificates I, II and III in Learning an Endangered Aboriginal Language. The aim of the

2011 class was for the TAFE to continue to offer this course and in addition offer a Certificate IV in Teaching an Endangered Aboriginal Language to 'give students the confidence and qualifications to go on and teach the Ngarrindjeri language to others, either in the TAFE sector or in schools or other institutions or just at home with family'.¹ Dr Mary-Anne Gale, a TAFE SA lecturer, asserted that there is a huge demand among Aboriginal community members, from both strong languages as well as languages under revival, for further language training and called for further funding and support for TAFE courses such as those offered at Murray Bridge²

- TAFE NSW has developed three nationally-recognised qualifications in Aboriginal Languages at Certificate I, II and III levels. Each of the qualifications can be customised to deliver training in any Aboriginal language, following consultation with and permissions from Elders and/or knowledge-holders in the local community. As at 31 December 2010, Aboriginal course enrolments totalled 532 across all three qualifications for Aboriginal Languages such as, Kamilaroi and Wiradjuri,³ and
- the Muurrbay Aboriginal Language and Culture Co-operative has joined with the North Coast Institute of TAFE to offer a Certificate I in the Gathang language. Ms Anna Ash, a Coordinator-Linguist with the Many Rivers Aboriginal Language Centre, stated that 45 students were expected to graduate with a Certificate I during 2012. The course had attracted people from a variety of backgrounds, including teachers, Aboriginal Education Assistants, people with an interest in language, Elders, and Year 11/12 students. Gathang people who are qualified can teach the language in school classrooms. The Many Rivers Aboriginal Language Centre supports and has developed dictionaries for about seven Indigenous languages in NSW and hopes to offer a Certificate I next year in the Yaygirr language.⁴

1 Teachers and Students of Cert III in Learning Endangered Aboriginal Language, Murray Bridge TAFE, South Australia, *Submission 18*, p. 5.

2 Teachers and Students of Cert III in Learning Endangered Aboriginal Language, Murray Bridge TAFE, South Australia, *Submission 18*, p. 10.

3 New South Wales Department of Education and Communities, *Submission 59*, p. 17.

4 A Ash, Muurrbay Aboriginal Language and Culture Co-operative, *Committee Hansard*, Brisbane, 6 October 2012, pp. 25 and 29.

Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education

- 5.5 The Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education (BIITE) is a tertiary education provider that services the education, training and research needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The BIITE offers a range of courses aligned to employment opportunities in remote Australia and to support the establishment of stronger, safer and healthier communities - from preparatory courses to Vocational Education and Training (VET) certificates, diploma level courses, higher education degrees, and postgraduate research programs.
- 5.6 Relevant VET courses that are available at BIITE include:
- Certificate I and Certificate II in Indigenous Language and Knowledge Work - These courses provide a qualification for employment as assistant language workers in community language centres, school language programs, interpreting and various other community based language areas. These courses enable the speakers of Indigenous languages to participate more fully in employment and community activities, developing skills that are readily transportable to a range of work contexts. The targeted participants in these courses are people who speak an Indigenous language and who are regarded as knowledge holders within their community or family network. Typically this cohort comprises mature people who have lived in remote settings for most of their lives, and
 - Certificate III and Certificate IV and Diploma in Education Support - These courses provide the skills and knowledge required to work in schools as assistant teachers and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education workers. The courses cover a broad range of aspects of the work in classrooms and schools. To be accepted into the courses all students must be employed by, or have access to, a school or educational workplace where they can undertake the on-the-job components of the course. The school through the school principal must be prepared to commit to a program being run in their school in partnership between BIITE and the school.
- 5.7 The higher education undergraduate programs of BIITE are delivered in partnership with Charles Darwin University (CDU). In 2011 BIITE entered into a collaborative partnership with CDU to establish the Australian Centre for Indigenous Knowledges and Education (ACIKE) for the shared delivery of a range of higher education and postgraduate study options which address the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. ACIKE delivery began in semester one of 2012.

5.8 Relevant courses offered by ACIKE in 2012 include:

- Diploma of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Knowledges
- Bachelor of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advocacy
- Bachelor of Indigenous Languages and Linguistics
- Bachelor of Teaching and Learning (Pre Service)
- Bachelor of Teaching and Learning Early Childhood
- Bachelor of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Knowledges (Honours)
- Graduate Certificate of Indigenous Education
- Graduate Certificate in Yolngu Studies, and
- Graduate Diploma of Indigenous Knowledges.⁵

Koori Centre, University of Sydney

5.9 The Master of Indigenous Language Education course is offered through the Koori Centre at the University of Sydney. The aim of the course is to sponsor qualified Indigenous teachers, working in NSW schools, to undertake specialist language retraining in order to teach NSW Aboriginal languages in NSW public schools and support the learning needs of students in Aboriginal languages. The course is delivered in an away-from-base mode over three one-week blocks each semester for one year. It is delivered flexibly through block release. Teachers remain in their work settings and carry out their usual teaching duties during the period of retraining. No language proficiency is required prior to undertaking the course.⁶

5.10 The course accepts people who are part way through completing a degree qualification. Mr John Hobson from the University of Sydney explained that the course had granted provisional entry into the masters course to graduates of two years of teacher training:

They can do the first semester and graduate with a certificate, or if they perform to a credit level across all the four units of study they can enter the masters. We can have the anomalous situation of

5 ACIKE, Courses available in 2012 <www.cdu.edu.au/acike/courses-and-programs> viewed 8 August 2012.

6 New South Wales Department of Education and Communities, *Submission 59*, p. 15.

somebody who has only two years training towards a teacher qualification graduating from us with a masters..⁷

- 5.11 Mr Hobson informed the Committee that there is currently no entry-level teacher qualification that has national recognition for appointment to a designated language teacher position in a school. The Master of Indigenous Languages Education is recognised only by the New South Wales Department of Education and Communities for appointment to a designated languages teacher positions in New South Wales.⁸

Limited authority to teach

- 5.12 A nationally recognised Indigenous languages teacher qualification would allow those trained teachers to move and work across jurisdictions. However, many people have an ambition to teach only their own language; they do not necessarily want a four year teaching degree that allows them to teach in other subject areas. One assistant teacher at the Alice Springs Languages Centre was happy to remain an assistant teacher rather than go through further study to become a qualified classroom teacher.⁹
- 5.13 A limited authority to teach, such as exists in Western Australia, is based on two years of training and permits people to teach their language in their local school. Elders or recognised speakers of the language are delegated authority to certify the adequacy of prospective teachers' fluency. Mrs Lola Jones, the Aboriginal Languages Coordinator-Curriculum Officer with the Western Australian Department of Education is responsible for running the state wide Aboriginal languages teacher training. She explained the training program in Western Australia:

The training grew out of a need for Aboriginal people to be able to get a qualification within the department. People who have completed the training are recognised as teachers, have a limited authority to teach as a language teacher and are paid as teachers. It has provided a career pathway for Aboriginal people in WA education department.¹⁰

7 J Hobson, University of Sydney, *Committee Hansard*, Sydney, 18 November 2011, p. 32.

8 J Hobson, University of Sydney, *Committee Hansard*, Sydney, 18 November 2011, p. 32.

9 D Castel, Alice Springs Language Centre, *Committee Hansard*, Alice Springs, 4 April 2012, p. 46.

10 L Jones, Western Australian Department of Education, *Committee Hansard*, Broome, 30 April 2012, p. 9.

- 5.14 Mr Hobson advocated for a national policy statement to guide teacher accreditation bodies on limited authorities to teach, perhaps based on two years of training, as is the case in Western Australia:

I think – a declaration, as I said, of national policy that we need a structure of things like limited authorities to teach. We need flexibility in recognition of teacher fluency and in recognition that different languages are at different stages in the maximum level of fluency that any person could possibly have.¹¹

- 5.15 While the Western Australian initiative is well supported, the state government department is unable to find a university to conduct the training course. Mrs Jones stated that the Western Australian Aboriginal languages teacher training is an anomaly because all professional learning is run by herself through the Professional Learning Institute:

There does not seem to be anybody else out there who can run the training, so at the moment I am still running the training. We are looking at universities to take on the training, which needs someone to teach the methodology aspect of language teaching, someone to teach the IT skills for making digital resources but you also need somebody who has the linguistics skills to support language speakers.¹²

- 5.16 Mrs Jones stated that Indigenous languages teacher training needs to continue. However, the universities were concerned that the numbers of student were too small to make it viable.¹³

- 5.17 Mrs Faith Baisden from the Eastern States Aboriginal Languages Group (ESALG) supported fast tracking registered teaching status for community teachers through universities, which could reduce school expenses of requiring more than one teacher in a classroom:

... the fact that there must be a registered teacher in the class and that puts such an expense on the education system having to have the registered teacher and then the community teacher in the classroom as well. We are trying to talk to the providers of training for the teachers to fast-track registered teaching status for community teachers. They may know their language but let us get them to the point where they can become regular teachers as well.

11 J Hobson, University of Sydney, *Committee Hansard*, Sydney, 18 November 2011, p. 32.

12 L Jones, Western Australian Department of Education, *Committee Hansard*, Broome, 30 April 2012, p. 9.

13 L Jones, Western Australian Department of Education, *Committee Hansard*, Broome, 30 April 2012, p. 12.

Then we say to regular teachers, would you like to learn language and EAL as well.¹⁴

Committee comment

- 5.18 In many cases and for a variety of reasons, Indigenous people will not complete full teaching degree qualifications.
- 5.19 The Committee commends the Western Australian government for the development of the limited authority to teach qualification being offered to Indigenous language teachers. This qualification allows Indigenous language teachers a qualification to be able to teach in a school classroom without the requirement of having a full teaching degree. The Committee believes this is a sound initiative and would like to see it developed in other jurisdictions.
- 5.20 The Western Australian initiative has several benefits. The limited authority to teach would not replace the need for more fully qualified Indigenous teachers, but the flexibility of the qualification would enable the schools to harness language expertise of local communities and provide employment opportunities for those committed to their local community and not seeking a national qualification.
- 5.21 Further, there should be clear pathways to full teacher qualifications and access to strategies such as master-apprentice schemes, as recommended later in this chapter.
- 5.22 The Standing Council on School Education and Early Childhood comprises of state, territory and Commonwealth Ministers with responsibility for these areas. This Council is ideally placed to develop incentives and greater opportunities for Indigenous language teacher training.

Recommendation 16 - Limited authority to teach

- 5.23 **The Committee recommends the Minister for Education work through the Standing Council on School Education and Early Childhood and teacher training authorities to develop a national framework of flexible and accessible training for Indigenous people to gain limited authority qualifications to teach.**

14 F Baisden, ESALG, *Committee Hansard*, Brisbane, 6 October 2011, p. 14.

- 5.24 The Committee notes the difficulty the Western Australian Government is having with finding a university to conduct the limited authority to teach course. Currently the course is being run by a dedicated officer within the Department of Education.
- 5.25 The Committee believes governments at all levels should work with higher education authorities to develop strategies to provide incentives for universities to offer Indigenous language teacher training courses.

Recommendation 17 - Indigenous language teacher training

- 5.26 **The Committee recommends the Minister for Education work through the Standing Council on School Education and Early Childhood to develop incentives for teacher training institutions to offer Indigenous language teacher training, such as a limited authority qualification to teach.**

Accessible teacher training

- 5.27 Numerous participants to the inquiry supported greater accessibility to teacher training. For example, Dr Brian Devlin from Charles Darwin University claimed that teacher training is not accessible to many remote Indigenous residents. Dr Devlin wrote in his submission that undertaking training in Darwin or Alice Springs is not an option for many local people who have young children or cannot live away from their partner/family for cultural reasons.¹⁵
- 5.28 Some witnesses referred to the benefits of the Remote Area Teacher Education (RATE) program which was offered by BIITE until the late 1990s and supported a lecturer in some growth towns working with assistant teachers towards gaining a qualification.
- 5.29 Ms Margaret Carew, a linguist working at BIITE, stated that qualified Indigenous teachers who studied through the RATE program are ageing and there is not the same number of qualified teachers coming through the system. Ms Carew believed that those people who once would have trained as teachers under the RATE program instead train as Indigenous education workers by completing certificate level training and getting paid at a lower levels and having less say in the school. Ms Carew

¹⁵ B Devlin, *Submission 81*, p. 8.

believed there should be more community development and flexibility in teacher training and qualifications. Ms Carew related a story of an Indigenous literacy worker with many years experience:

A fabulous irony that I observed involved a woman I know, who has never been a qualified teacher but who has worked for many years, since the late sixties, as a literacy worker. She is a highly fluent writer of her first language and a fluent speaker of course of a number of languages of the area. She qualified a couple of years ago through Batchelor as a Certificate III as an Indigenous education worker. I thought there was a kind of sad irony in that that is about as far as she has got, and she does not even live in Maningrida anymore; she lives in Darwin. So there has been a disenfranchisement.¹⁶

5.30 The Committee received evidence of unhappiness around the merger between BIITE and CDU. Some witnesses were concerned that there would be less accessibility and support for students in higher education courses, particularly for Indigenous people living in remote areas.

5.31 Ms Janine Oldfield, a lecturer at BIITE in Alice Springs spoke of decline in numbers of student enrolments in the higher education courses. Ms Oldfield attributed some of the reduction in enrolment numbers to the barriers around online enrolment and insufficient marketing of courses offered:

We do not appear to have any new enrolments; we think there is a complication with the enrolment status. People have to do online enrolment, which is quite difficult for remote people. It is a very complicated enrolment process. I find it extraordinarily difficult; I can barely get through it myself. It is not well advertised. People do not know anything about ACIKE, so it is not attracting people. People do not even know Batchelor is still doing higher ed[ucation]. Remote areas are being told by schools and principals that there is no Batchelor higher ed[ucation] anymore. So at this stage we are seeing a drastic reduction in numbers.¹⁷

5.32 At the public hearing in Darwin, Dr Laughren agreed that there is no incentive or invitation for remote Aboriginal people to do teacher training.¹⁸

16 M Carew, *Committee Hansard*, Alice Springs, 4 April 2012, pp. 10-11.

17 J Oldfield, BIITE, *Committee Hansard*, Alice Springs, 4 April 2012, p. 1.

18 M Laughren, *Committee Hansard*, Darwin, 2 May 2012, p. 47.

- 5.33 Ms Claire Kilgariff from the BIITE acknowledged that numbers of students enrolled in the higher education had diminished during 2012 as they moved into the ACIKE partnership. However, Ms Kilgariff believed those numbers would increase as the ACIKE brand becomes better known and students understand the courses on offer.¹⁹
- 5.34 Ms Kilgariff stated that the BIITE was in a difficult financial state and that economic sustainability was part of the reason to push a partnership with CDU. However, it was clarified at the public hearing in Darwin that BIITE is now in a healthy financial state. Ms Kilgariff stated that BIITE is working to ensure that it is still able to supply the same level of support for its students and that its staff are able to provide the same level of commitment:

Whilst our two institutions are partnered together, the students are still able to choose to study in the Batchelor mode, as we call it. That means they are able to attend workshops at Batchelor and then have online support and then come back to Batchelor for a final workshop. At first, when the partnership was proposed, there was a strong anxiety that students would not still be able to study in that environment of cultural safety where they would be Indigenous only students. We have very strongly maintained that, even to the extent that, in online environments, we have been very determined and passionate about ensuring that the students are in an Indigenous only environment. If they choose to they can actually enter into the larger student body environment but they are actually get the choice whether to do that.²⁰

School release for teacher training

- 5.35 Some witnesses referred to the benefits of education departments encouraging the professional development of their Indigenous language teachers and supporting their release from schools for further development and qualifications. Ms Lola Jones from the Western Australian Department of Education stated that the department supports the release of language teachers to undertake further study:

The department has just organised through one of the universities that, if language teachers decide to go on and do a full teaching degree, while they are on teaching prac their school gets teacher relief paid. While they do their block releases their school gets

19 C Kilgariff, BIITE, *Committee Hansard*, Darwin, 2 May 2012, p. 59.

20 C Kilgariff, BIITE, *Committee Hansard*, Darwin, 2 May 2012, p. 61.

teacher relief. And it also means that they stay on salary while they are doing their study. A teacher at one of the high schools in the Goldfields is currently studying at Curtin University. When she goes away for five weeks of block release she still gets paid; her school gets a relief teacher provided. That is encouraging our language teachers to gain a full degree as a classroom teacher.²¹

- 5.36 Another example is the Yipirinya School in Central Australia which gives incentives to its Indigenous staff to study at BIITE to gain certification and qualifications. Mr Lance Box from the Yipirinya School stated:

We have actually had one of our staff members go through and qualify as a classroom teacher. She was teaching in our school until she had to leave due to pregnancy. She will be back. We have another two teachers who have recently enrolled in a diploma of teaching course. Hopefully, in three or four years time they will be qualified teachers. ... They are currently studying through Batchelor Institute and currently work as assistant teachers in our school.²²

- 5.37 The principal of Arlparra School in the Utopia Homelands felt privileged to work in a school where all assistant teachers were supported to undertake further studies.²³
- 5.38 In New South Wales Aboriginal teachers are able to apply for sponsorship from the Aboriginal Education and Training Directorate for HECS contributions and relief payments to attend study blocks in order to complete the postgraduate Master of Indigenous Language Education program.²⁴
- 5.39 In contrast, the Committee received some evidence that teachers are unable to be released from their workplaces to take further study in teaching Indigenous languages.²⁵ Mrs Anna Ash from Muurrbay Aboriginal Language and Culture Co-operative (MALCC) in NSW believed the education departments should provide greater support for teacher release for training and development.²⁶

21 L Jones, Western Australian Department of Education, *Committee Hansard*, Broome, 30 April 2012, p. 10.

22 L Box, Yipirinya School, *Committee Hansard*, Alice Springs, 4 April 2012, p. 25.

23 K Kasmira, Arlparra School, *Committee Hansard*, Utopia Homelands, 3 April 2012, p. 8.

24 New South Wales Department of Education and Communities, *Submission 59*, p. 13.

25 Teachers and Students of Cert III in Learning Endangered Aboriginal Language, Murray Bridge, TAFE SA, *Submission 18*, p. 5.

26 A Ash, Muurrbay Aboriginal Language and Culture Co-operative, *Committee Hansard*, Brisbane, 6 October 2012, p. 28.

Coaching and mentoring Indigenous language teachers

- 5.40 Witnesses referred to the importance of ongoing in-school support, such as coaching and mentoring, for Indigenous teachers.²⁷ Mr Peter Williams from the MALCC in New South Wales supported in-service training by language experts for assistant teachers:

Language is being taught in primary and high schools in a whole of the areas and we are stretched to the limit as far as teachers go. We feel if we can teach people like teachers aides in-service they can help in the classroom. We know they are pretty much burdened with what they do and this will be just a little more, but then they would be a bit more qualified and therefore their pay scales can go up.²⁸

- 5.41 In the Kimberley in Western Australia, teacher trainees are observed and given in-school support depending on what their needs are. Mrs Jones spoke of the importance of language teachers having mentors who might be language teachers, elders or language specialists. Mrs Jones stated that language teachers must work through the complexities of ensuring their teaching is culturally and age appropriate and linguistically correct. Mrs Jones believed the master-apprentice model, whereby a fluent speaker, a master, works with a partial speaker, an apprentice, can be effective in-service support for language teachers.²⁹

- 5.42 The importance of language teachers having strong relationships with the language speakers was reinforced:

Old people were multilingual and they carried those languages, and we do not want to be messing them up now because we are saying it wrong. Sometimes when you are reviving a language it is really hard because the grammar of the language is very different from English. So you want to make sure you are getting it right, and that is a hard thing for our language teachers.³⁰

- 5.43 The New South Wales government supported the establishment of master-apprentice schemes to encourage an increase in the number of language

27 K Lowe, New South Wales Board of Studies, *Committee Hansard*, 18 November 2011, p. 41; Warlpiri Patu Kurlangu Jaru, *Submission 121*, p. 10.

28 P Williams, A Ash, Muurrbay Aboriginal Language and Culture Co-operative, *Committee Hansard*, Brisbane, 6 October 2012, p. 28.

29 L Jones, Western Australian Department of Education, *Committee Hansard*, Broome, 30 April 2012, p. 11.

30 L Jones, Western Australian Department of Education, *Committee Hansard*, Broome, 30 April 2012, p. 11.

teachers, and the implementation of succession training for the long term sustainability of language learning programs.³¹ Ms Carew, a linguist at BIITE, supported further evaluation of the merits of the master-apprentice model as a way of supporting advocacy and networking of key people working in Indigenous languages areas.³²

- 5.44 Margaret Florey from the Resource Network for Linguistic Diversity stated that the master-apprentice model has ‘worked with great effect in other parts of the world’ to revitalise languages.³³

Committee comment

- 5.45 The Committee recognises there is a desperate need for more Indigenous language teachers throughout Australia. Indigenous people who have the ambition to become qualified teachers and specialist teachers must have accessibility to training to further their career. This will require a greater degree of flexibility from schools as well as training institutions.
- 5.46 In some circumstances state and territory governments are supporting schools to release teacher assistants to attend further studies. The Committee supports the efforts by state and territory governments to make language teaching qualifications more accessible.
- 5.47 However, the Committee heard that some schools are reluctant to release Indigenous language teachers for training and development. The Committee considers that training and development is essential and needs to be valued and prioritised by education departments in all jurisdictions.
- 5.48 Ongoing in-school mentoring and coaching is an important aspect of developing the skills of an Indigenous language teacher. The Committee encourages the states and territories to support the coaching and mentoring of teachers by Indigenous language experts.
- 5.49 In addition, the Committee views the master-apprentice model as an effective way to provide further development for Indigenous language teachers in schools. The use of the master-apprentice model in schools would have the added effect of encouraging the maintenance and revival of Indigenous languages where there are a limited number of fluent speakers.

31 NSW Government, *Submission 98*, p. 4.

32 M Carew, *Committee Hansard*, Alice Springs, 4 April 2012, pp. 11-12.

33 M Florey, Resource Network for Linguistic Diversity (RNLD), *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 16 February 2012, p. 10.

Recommendation 18 - Indigenous language teachers - training and career pathways

- 5.50 The Committee recommends that the Minister for Education work through the Standing Council on School Education and Early Childhood to develop strategies for training Indigenous language teachers to improve access to qualifications, full accreditation and career pathways as well as providing school support and mentorship where required.

Recommendation 19 – Master-apprentice schemes

- 5.51 The Committee recommends that the Minister for Education work through the Standing Council on School Education and Early Childhood to give consideration to establishing master-apprentice schemes in schools to provide in-service support for Indigenous language teachers.

Attracting and retaining Indigenous teachers

- 5.52 A majority of regional and remote schools have difficulty in attracting and retaining teachers. One of the proposed solutions is to encourage Indigenous people from communities to train as teachers.
- 5.53 Some witnesses asserted that, in many cases, Indigenous teachers will remain in their communities to teach, providing communities with some continuity in qualified staff who can speak the first language. Conversely, non Indigenous teachers in regional and remote schools tend to remain in communities for shorter periods.
- 5.54 Professor Jane Simpson spoke of the benefits of investing in training Indigenous teachers at BIITE:
- ... it would be well worth investing heavily in places like Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education. The really important thing, particularly for remote communities, is having teachers who are prepared to stay there for more than a year. I think the only way you will get that is through training local Indigenous people, supporting Batchelor college in recruiting teachers from remote

areas and giving those teachers EAL training. That would be a really excellent investment.³⁴

- 5.55 The retention rate of teachers in remote areas of the Northern Territory has been around six to seven months. Under the Northern Territory Emergency Response, the Commonwealth Government was engaged with the Northern Territory Government in recruiting 200 additional teachers for remote schools in the Northern Territory by the end of 2012. The retention rate of teachers in remote communities improved since the additional teachers were recruited as there has been a focus on recruiting and retaining quality teachers in remote areas.³⁵
- 5.56 Under the *Quality Teaching and Enhancing Literacy* measure, the Commonwealth Government committed \$44.3 million over three years (2009-10 to 2011-12) to Northern Territory education providers to develop career pathways for Indigenous staff, increase the number of Indigenous staff with education qualifications, and provide support and programs to enable teachers and students achieve improved outcomes in literacy and numeracy in 73 targeted remote communities.³⁶
- 5.57 The Northern Territory Government asserted that one of the biggest issues in teaching in Indigenous communities is that they do not have enough qualified Indigenous teachers who speak both Standard Australian English (SAE) and Indigenous languages. Through the *Local Teachers in Local Schools* initiative the Northern Territory Government has set a target of 200 additional Indigenous teachers by the year 2018.³⁷
- 5.58 The *Local Teachers in Local Schools* initiative aims to address some of the challenges of recruiting and retaining quality teaching staff for remote communities by assisting Indigenous students to become teachers, with a focus on encouraging them to stay at school longer and to consider a career in teaching. This includes mentoring senior secondary students, particularly in very remote Indigenous schools.³⁸
- 5.59 At the public hearing in Darwin, Minister McCarthy from the Northern Territory Government, told the Committee there are 115 Indigenous

34 J Simpson, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 9 February 2012, p. 2.

35 S Goodwin, Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR), *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 1 March 2012, pp. 7-8.

36 DEEWR, *Submission 131*, p. 19.

37 G Barnes, Northern Territory Government, *Committee Hansard*, 2 May 2012, Darwin, p. 4.

38 Northern Territory Government, 'Territory 2030 Strategic Plan, Data Snapshots' <www.territory2030.nt.gov.au/documents/snapshots/pdf/ED3.1.pdf> viewed 15 August 2012.

teachers working in DET schools and 51 Indigenous Territorians being supported to study teacher education through various programs.³⁹

Recognising the value of Indigenous teachers

- 5.60 Indigenous teachers working in schools have completed different levels of teaching qualifications. Teachers and assistant teachers and are considered essential elements of school staff by communities and local schools. The Yiripinya School in Central Australia, which teaches four of the central desert languages, employs Indigenous staff as teachers, assistant teachers, council members and various ancillary positions.⁴⁰
- 5.61 In the Aboriginal and Islander Independent Community School in Acacia Ridge in Queensland where there are high numbers of Indigenous staff, attendance rates of students are higher than average.⁴¹
- 5.62 Mr John Bradbury, who worked on numeracy projects in remote schools with high Indigenous populations in the Northern Territory for six years, argued that investing in assistant teachers helps to create a sustainable resource. A finding of the projects was that an equal partnership between the classroom teacher and the assistant teacher was essential and helped to achieve better outcomes for students. Mr Bradbury stated that there was very positive feedback from the assistant teachers, the schools and the local community about the community engagement and community empowerment that was happening.⁴²
- 5.63 Ms Kerry Kasmira, the Principal at Arlparra School in Utopia Homelands, emphasised the value of Indigenous assistant teachers who speak and understand English and the local Indigenous language:
- Without exception, our assistant teachers have far more professional diversity than any of the white teachers here, in terms of being able to address the needs of the students.⁴³
- 5.64 Many witnesses referred to the important role local Indigenous teachers play in teaching children their contact language as well as Standard

39 M McCarthy, Northern Territory Government, *Committee Hansard*, Darwin, 2 May 2012, p. 2.

40 L Box, Yiripinya School, *Committee Hansard*, Alice Springs, 4 April 2012, p. 24.

41 P Downey, Aboriginal and Islander Independent Community School Inc., *Committee Hansard*, Brisbane, 6 October 2012, p. 34.

42 J Bradbury, *Committee Hansard*, Darwin, 2 May 2012, pp. 6-5.

43 K Kasmira, Arlparra School, *Committee Hansard*, Utopia Homelands, 3 April 2012, p. 6.

Australian English (SAE).⁴⁴ Mr Richard Trudgen relayed a conversation with Indigenous Elders who believed they could read, write and speak English well because they were taught by teachers who spoke their first language well.⁴⁵

- 5.65 Mrs Nyoka Hatfield talked about her own experiences teaching Dharumbal language and culture in Queensland schools:

I have never had any teacher training or education. I am lucky because the teachers that I do come up with say that I have a gift. And I am thankful that I have that gift. I know that a lot of other Indigenous people on their own country will not have that gift. But there are also a lot who will have it and will be able to connect with the children and interact with them the way that I do. I suppose that I am looking at it from the perspective of not having teacher training or being teachers.

... I suppose that I could have gone and had that training. I had the opportunity. But I thought that I did not have the time, as what I wanted to do needed to be done now. I had to get into those schools and do things now, because you never know what is going to happen. For myself, it just comes from my experience and my knowledge of my culture and my language. That is the capacity in which I go into the schools.⁴⁶

- 5.66 The New South Wales Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Department of Education and Communities supported strategies to ensure that community based language teachers receive appropriate wages, conditions of employment, accreditation and support, which is commensurate with the expertise and valuable role they fulfil in language learning:

There is no acknowledgment of prior learning for the significant cultural knowledge that these language speakers bring into the classroom. The lack of an adequate wage for community language teachers is compounded by insecurity of employment, with a lack of permanency in language teaching positions. Standard employment conditions such as sick leave entitlements and

44 V Garrawurra, Shepherdson College, *Committee Hansard*, Darwin, 2 May 2012, p. 50; A Ash, Muurrbay Aboriginal Language and Culture Co-operative, *Committee Hansard*, Brisbane, 6 October 2012, p. 27.

45 R Trudgen, *Committee Hansard*, Darwin, 2 May 2012, p. 19.

46 N Hatfield, *Committee Hansard*, Brisbane, 6 October 2011, p. 9.

professional training are not accessible for community language teachers.⁴⁷

- 5.67 Mrs Jones from the Western Australian Department of Education spoke of the special skills a qualified Indigenous languages teacher brings to a school and should be paid more than classroom teachers:

I see that they are the top of the heap, because you have to have not only all the skills of a teacher but also the language skills. Most of our language teachers only want to teach language; they are not interested in science and social studies and all those other things. There are lots of non-Aboriginal teachers who can teach that, or Aboriginal teachers who do not speak their language, who do not come from that area. Aboriginal teachers who graduate as language teachers have all the teaching and reporting responsibilities that other teachers have. ...

I think language teachers should be paid more than classroom teachers, because they have got double skills. It is not just the teaching; you have also got the language component.⁴⁸

- 5.68 Other participants in the inquiry argued for a review of pay scales for Indigenous language teachers which include recognition of language knowledge and accreditation at a range of levels.⁴⁹ Ms Ash from MALCC supported pay scales which value and recognise people who have completed various levels of training and qualifications:

Various departments of education need to recognise the importance of those people, pay scales need to be developed, positions need to be created. A couple of the Gumbanynggir teachers are very well qualified. They might have a masters in the Indigenous language education, but they are being employed on a casual basis across several schools. They have no job security and no holiday pay. It is disgusting that people are so neglected. Maybe the education departments have to be alerted to some of the problems and made to realise that it is essential that they deal with this situation.⁵⁰

47 Aboriginal Affairs New South Wales and Department of Education and Communities, *Submission 98*, pp. 3 and 12-13.

48 L Jones, Western Australian Department of Education, *Committee Hansard*, Broome, 30 April 2012, p. 10.

49 Queensland Indigenous Languages Advisory Committee, *Submission 82*, p. 4; ESALG, *Submission 25*, p. 5.

50 A Ash, Muurrbay Aboriginal Language and Culture Co-operative, *Committee Hansard*, Brisbane, 6 October 2012, p. 28.

Committee comment

- 5.69 The evidence clearly demonstrated that schools place high value on the work of Indigenous teachers, whether they are qualified at teacher or assistant teacher level. School principals and other school staff recognise the value of the language and cultural knowledge that Indigenous assistant teachers bring to the classroom.
- 5.70 The Committee believes that there is a need for more Indigenous teachers in schools and better recognition of the work they do. In language learning classrooms it is important to have a mix of qualified teachers, teacher assistants, volunteers, and fluent language speakers.
- 5.71 Attracting and retaining people to Indigenous language teacher positions is a challenging prospect, especially in remote areas, and governments are implementing programs to support more Indigenous teaching positions. The Committee believes that valuing and recognising the work of Indigenous teachers will go a long way towards attracting and retaining teachers.
- 5.72 Many assistant teachers come to school without formal qualifications. However, Indigenous teachers have the cultural and language knowledge that is an important ingredient in the mix of teaching staff.
- 5.73 As previously stated, the Committee believes teacher training should be accessible and offered at different qualification levels. Pay scales should reflect the skills and value that Indigenous teachers bring to the classroom. The Committee stresses there should be clear career pathways to full teaching accreditation available.
- 5.74 The Committee notes that the Western Australian Department of Education is paying teachers who gain the limited authority to teach qualification with the equivalent salary of a fully qualified teacher.
- 5.75 The Committee encourages all state and territory governments to review pay scales for Indigenous assistant teachers and any expansion of the limited authority to teach positions, in order to ensure the scales adequately reflect the skills these teachers bring to the schools.

Indigenous language teaching resources

- 5.76 Resources need to be available in languages which are being taught in school. In many Indigenous languages those resources may be scarce.

Owing to the diversity of Indigenous languages there have not been sufficient resources produced to teach some languages.

- 5.77 Many language programs have small budgets and the Committee heard numerous times about people working in the field voluntarily in order to save their language. The Eastern States Indigenous Languages Group called for an 'urgent injection of funds into the development of resources'.⁵¹
- 5.78 Despite these funding challenges several resources for teaching Indigenous languages were shown to the Committee throughout Australia. The Committee was impressed with the range of hard copy language learning resources, including:
- Gumbaynggirr Dictionary and Learner's Grammar, and several other language work books and Dreamtime stories by Muurrbay Aboriginal Language and Culture Co-operative, Nambucca Heads, New South Wales
 - Children's booklets using both Dharumbal language and English, by Nicky Hatfield and the Gidarjil Corporation, Rockhampton, Queensland
 - Stories and children's readers in numerous languages produced by Papulu Apparr-Kari Language Corporation, Tennant Creek, Northern Territory, and
 - Language learning resources including playing cards and flash cards in Yawuru, by Nyamba Buru Yawuru, Broome, Western Australia.
- 5.79 Dr Marmion from Australian Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs (AIATSIS) stated that, with assistance, schools can produce their own materials.⁵² Dr Robert Jackson from the Australian Council of TESOL Associations (ACTA) referred to resources which are being produced locally in communities, however Indigenous languages teachers and students do not have access to resources in some Indigenous language:

I am aware of some very good resources that have been produced, but they are being produced for local solutions, local communities. ... Again, with a lot of Aboriginal students you are looking at a language that does not have a print form, a written form. That is another overlay. You need to then transcribe the language, have a

51 Eastern States Indigenous Languages Group, *Submission 25*, p. 5.

52 D Marmion, AIATSIS, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 7 July 2011, p. 6.

written version of the language, and then get the student used to the idea that language occurs both in an oral form and in a print-based form. That is another step.⁵³

- 5.80 Mrs Lola Jones from the Western Australian Department of Education stated one of the major issues with teaching Indigenous languages is the need to produce resources:

We currently have 20 Aboriginal languages taught in 55 department schools in Western Australia, but you cannot go and buy a Walmajarri or a Yawuru set of resources. So resource production was one of our biggest areas as well as training people.⁵⁴

- 5.81 She explained that it became necessary to start producing resources in Indigenous languages and the Western Australian Department of Education is using different technologies to create resources such as digital dictionaries:

We started with handdrawn and handwritten materials, and then photocopiers came along and we had blackline masters and we thought we were really flash. Now we have digital images and we have digital resources and we can display our books and materials on interactive whiteboards. So we have really come from the draw-it-yourself and do-it-yourself age to the digital age. One of the others mentioned that they are working with the Lexique Pro dictionary, which is an interactive dictionary on the computer. We are running training for a couple of languages at the moment for teachers to input data into Lexique Pro dictionaries so that kids in school have more access to digital dictionaries.⁵⁵

- 5.82 Other states and territories are using technologies to produce resources. The Northern Territory Department of Education and Training is contributing \$160 000 to the Living Archives of Aboriginal Languages project that will digitise and create a computer archive of publications in more than 16 Northern Territory-Australian Indigenous languages. The Northern Territory Library has developed several resources concentrating

53 R Jackson, ACTA, *Committee Hansard*, 18 November 2011, Sydney, p. 27.

54 L Jones, Western Australian Department of Education, *Committee Hansard*, Broome, 30 April 2012, p. 9.

55 L Jones, Western Australian Department of Education, *Committee Hansard*, Broome, 30 April 2012, p. 9.

on early childhood programs and preserving languages in books and using multimedia resources such as iPads.⁵⁶

- 5.83 The issue of ownership of copyright of resources has been highlighted by participants in the inquiry. Mrs Faith Baisden from the ESALG described a situation in which a community teacher had produced resources with a school and the Department of Education and Training took ownership of those resources. Mrs Baisden claimed that this causes anxiety for people who put their language information into those resources only to have the government hold copyright on it. Mrs Baisden supported communities producing material and selling it:

Another thing we would like to say about resources is: wouldn't it be great to support communities to produce their own and sell them back to the departments? That would be a way of capacity building, business building and helping the communities make their own and sell them back and you will not have that issue.⁵⁷

- 5.84 The NSW Board of Studies referred to the recognition deserved by Indigenous people who work to teach language and produce resources for use in schools:

There are many cases where community members have devoted years of effort to developing their own skills in the local language, producing resources and teaching, often for little payment, only to see the program disappear because of a change of classroom teacher or school principal. This is particularly dispiriting for the Aboriginal people who typically remain in their community year after year, while school personnel tend to move on quite regularly.⁵⁸

Committee comment

- 5.85 The Committee has considered the long term establishment of a library of Indigenous language resources. New technologies are the way forward to produce a multitude of cost-effective resources for teaching in the many Indigenous languages across the country. Resources produced with new technologies could be transferred more easily across jurisdictions and in different Indigenous languages. In Chapter 7 the Committee discusses

56 M McCarthy, Northern Territory Government, *Committee Hansard*, Darwin, 2 May 2012, pp. 2-3.

57 F Baisden, Eastern States Aboriginal Languages Group, *Committee Hansard*, Brisbane, 6 October 2011, pp. 16-17.

58 New South Wales Board of Studies, *Submission 73*, p. 9.

archiving and storing Indigenous language resources for future generations.

- 5.86 The Committee recognises the considerable work, expertise and passion behind producing the books, posters, CDs, audio visuals, databases and other resources by language centres, community members, elders and linguists. It is important that these resources are available to schools and teachers as part of the teaching resources.
- 5.87 Government education departments need to understand and respect community attachment to and the cultural significance of the language resources being produced, and work with the schools to ensure that relevant Indigenous language resources are included in schools where possible.
- 5.88 The Committee encourages better partnerships and coordination between schools, language centres and other community groups in terms of sharing Indigenous resources and facilitating Indigenous language learning within schools.
- 5.89 The Committee considers that language resources funded by the Indigenous Language Support (ILS) program and produced by language centres and communities should be available to be shared with local schools for the mutual benefit of teachers and students and the revitalisation and maintenance of the language.

Recommendation 20 - Sharing language teaching resources

- 5.90 **The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth Government amend the Indigenous Language Support (ILS) program funding criteria to ensure that language materials produced with ILS program support should, where practical and culturally appropriate, be available to be shared with schools and educational institutions as a teaching resource, with proper acknowledgment of its creators.**

EAL/D training

- 5.91 The Committee received a significant amount of evidence that teachers in Indigenous communities require training in teaching English as an additional language or dialect (EAL/D). As discussed earlier, for many Indigenous students English is not their first language and they may

communicate to varying degrees across a range of Indigenous and contact languages. Many participants in the inquiry referred to the need for all teachers to have some experience and a sound knowledge of how to teach EAL/D, particularly when the school has a high number of students with EAL/D.⁵⁹

- 5.92 Miss Claire Gorman, a former teacher and current Queensland Department of Education and Training (Queensland DET) representative, discussed the importance of developing knowledge in teaching EAL/D to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students:

I often say when I am talking to people that as a teacher it took me years not only to understand the barrier that not having English was creating for the students in my classrooms but to become highly skilled to the point where I think I was making a difference with the kids I was teaching.⁶⁰

- 5.93 Australians for Native Title and Reconciliation recommended:

... teaching of English as a second language become a compulsory training component for teachers in remote Aboriginal communities in recognition of the fact that English is a second, third or even fourth language for many Aboriginal children, particularly in those communities.⁶¹

- 5.94 Mr John Hobson referred to the damage that can occur if a teacher does not have EAL training before teaching in a remote Indigenous community:

I would advocate that if people are going to go into remote Indigenous schools it should be an absolutely essential requirement for placement that they do have EAL training. Without it they are largely a burden on the community. It is inflicting an ineffective teacher on the students. These kids are so far behind the eight ball now that they really need our best EAL teachers to be working with them, not predominantly first-year-out people who are going to last three months ...⁶²

59 R Jackson, ACTA, *Committee Hansard*, Sydney, 18 November 2011, p. 28; Koori Centre, University of Sydney, *Submission 7*, p. 4; K Kasmira, Arlparra School, *Committee Hansard*, Utopia Homelands, 3 April 2012, p. 7.

60 C Gorman, Queensland DET, *Committee Hansard*, Brisbane, 6 October 2011, p. 8.

61 J Phillips, Australians for Native Title and Reconciliation, *Committee Hansard*, Sydney, 18 November 2011, p. 8.

62 J Hobson, Koori Centre, University of Sydney, *Committee Hansard*, Sydney, 18 November 2011, pp. 34-5.

- 5.95 Many teacher training institutions have an EAL/D component, however it is not a compulsory part of training and accreditation in any jurisdiction.
- 5.96 Every new teacher in the Northern Territory has access to a course on teaching EAL at Charles Darwin University which is funded by the Northern Territory Government.⁶³ Kerry Kasmira, the Principal at Arlparra School in the Utopia Homelands, stated that there is strong departmental support for EAL training in the Northern Territory. Three out of nine of her staff were involved in post-graduate studies in EAL/D and one of her senior teachers was completing a masters in teaching EAL/D.⁶⁴
- 5.97 The majority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in Australian schools speak a variety of Aboriginal English, an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander creole, one or more traditional heritage languages or any combination of these as their home language. Mr Robert Jackson from ACTA referred to incorrect assumptions by schools that Indigenous students home language is English:
- Currently, in many situations where students speak a variety of Aboriginal English and/or an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander creole as their home language, this language or language variety is unnamed or unidentified and thus goes unrecognised by schools and education authorities. It is assumed, incorrectly, that the student's home language is English. Students are often subjected to unsuitable instruction or methodologies and inappropriate referrals for educational remediation as a result.⁶⁵
- 5.98 The Aboriginal and Islander Independent Community School Inc in Queensland submitted that the majority of their students speak Aboriginal English, therefore it is important that greater attention is given within Indigenous education policy and programs to the role that Aboriginal English plays in the literacy and language skills of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. The school recommended that pre-service teacher education in Australia address Aboriginal English use by urban Indigenous students and the importance this plays in their connection to their traditional languages, their academic achievement and the maintenance of their distinct cultural identity as first nations peoples.⁶⁶

63 G Barnes, Northern Territory Government, *Committee Hansard*, Darwin, 2 May 2012, p. 7.

64 K Kasmira, Arlparra School, *Committee Hansard*, Utopia Homelands, 3 April 2012, p. 7.

65 R Jackson, ACTA, *Committee Hansard*, Sydney, 18 November 2011, p. 25.

66 Aboriginal and Islander Independent Community School Inc, *Submission 133*, pp. 1-2.

- 5.99 Many Aboriginal students in NSW's public schools use some form of Aboriginal English as their main language. Many Aboriginal students are bi-dialectal, meaning they use both Aboriginal English and Standard Australian English at home and at school. The NSW Department of Education and Communities' Aboriginal Education and Training Directorate provides professional learning and advice to teachers in developing bi-dialectal approaches to teaching Standard Australian English to Aboriginal students who speak Aboriginal English as their home dialect.⁶⁷
- 5.100 In NSW teachers from 88 schools were offered a two-day course supporting application of EAL in delivering English literacy to Aboriginal students:
- I am aware that the 88 schools took up the opportunity. What happened was: when we were targeting particular teachers, the enthusiasm was so great that we had more than the two or three teachers in the school who were going to attend, attending. That is a very exciting outcome because it demonstrates the recognition of Aboriginal English. It also demonstrates the critical importance of this: our students are being taught, assessed and reported on in standard Australian English; they are speaking Aboriginal English, so the understandings of the constructs and code-switching those students encounter every day in the engagement of education in general is critical. That is one of the most positive results of doing the EAL strategy in New South Wales.⁶⁸
- 5.101 In Western Australia the *Literacy and English as a Second Language in the Early Years Project* operates across the Government, Catholic and Independent schools sectors. The project's aim is to improve the literacy outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students whose home language is not English. To achieve its goal, the project is addressing three key elements - teacher professional learning, school leadership, and advanced professional learning.⁶⁹
- 5.102 In Queensland the Bridging the Language Gap project, funded by the Commonwealth Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) and involving the Queensland Department of Education and the Queensland Catholic Education Commission, supported personnel from 89 schools to provide professional development

67 New South Wales Department of Education and Communities, *Submission 59*, p. 19.

68 M Hall, New South Wales Department of Education and Communities, *Committee Hansard*, Sydney, 18 November 2011, p. 20.

69 DEEWR, *Submission 131*, p. 19.

to assist with building their capacity to identify, support and monitor EAL/D learners in the process of learning Standard Australian English (SAE).⁷⁰

- 5.103 The Northern Indigenous Schooling Support Unit (ISSU) in Queensland has a Language Perspectives Team that consists of teachers and linguists. The team conducts research on second language acquisition and vernacular languages, supports schools with building capacity to meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander EAL/D learners. The ISSU Languages Perspectives Team supports the following projects:
- Adopt-A-School Initiative - Teachers who are experienced at teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander EAL/D learners work with schools and teachers to help build their capacity, and
 - EAL Essentials workshops – four day workshops to provide an initial source of information for teachers who are working with Indigenous EAL students. The workshop provides an opportunity to develop understandings and practical skills for the classroom.⁷¹
- 5.104 The Queensland Department of Education and Training is the lead agency working with equivalent departments in other states to develop professional development resources to support with building the capacity of teachers to meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander EAL/D learners. The two cross jurisdictional projects are:
- the Teaching English as An Additional Language or Dialect Online Professional Learning Resource project will develop a comprehensive professional development course in-line with the National Professional Standards for Teachers. It will align with professional development and registration requirements for participating jurisdictions and will possibly have links with universities. The resource is scheduled to be available for use by teachers from mid 2013, and
 - the English as an Additional Language or Dialect Online Package will provide teachers new to remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander schools pragmatic, practical strategies to assist them with their first 10 weeks in the remote context.⁷²
- 5.105 In addition to EAL/D training, cultural training should be considered an essential part of a teacher's training. Young teachers often begin their teaching career in remote Indigenous communities where preparatory
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70 Queensland DET, *Submission 109*, p. 9.

71 Queensland DET, *Submission 109*, p. 11.

72 Queensland DET, *Submission 109*, p. 11.

cultural and language training is essential. However, currently such training is only offered sporadically.

- 5.106 In Queensland the Remote Area Teacher Education Program has been developed by James Cook University and has a mandatory component in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures as part of its teacher pre-service training.⁷³ Also in Queensland, the state government is working with the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) on developing the resources for pre-service teaching around culture and language.⁷⁴

Committee comment

- 5.107 In present day Australia there are children from a vast array of cultures and first languages or dialects. This is the rich tapestry of culture prevalent in today's society and is not confined to remote areas or to areas of high Indigenous populations.
- 5.108 The evidence to the Committee demonstrated that there are high numbers of Indigenous students going to school in urban, regional and remote areas with a first language or dialect other than SAE.
- 5.109 The Committee believes that students who speak dialects or creoles, such as Aboriginal English, may require EAL/D teaching. In Chapter 4 the Committee recommended that education departments identify the first language spoken by the child when commencing early childhood learning. These assessments would assist with understanding the demand for EAL/D teaching not sufficiently utilised and funded in schools.
- 5.110 The Committee agrees with many participants in the inquiry that every trainee teacher should have EAL/D training so that they have the requisite skills to aid the child's learning and ensure schooling is a productive rather than a confusing learning environment.
- 5.111 In particular, the Committee is of the view all teachers working in schools with a high percentage of EAL/D students should be required to have EAL/D training.
- 5.112 The Committee considers there needs to be a shift in teacher training institutions to recognise EAL/D as an essential part of teacher training. The requirement needs to come from the state education departments to

73 S Armitage, Queensland DET, *Committee Hansard*, Brisbane, 6 October 2011, p. 5.

74 S Armitage, Queensland DET, *Committee Hansard*, Brisbane, 6 October 2011, p. 5.

drive teacher training institutions to provide EAL training as a compulsory part of their teaching courses.

- 5.113 EAL/D training should be a requisite part of pre-service training. In addition, in-service EAL/D training for those teachers already working in schools should be expanded and all teachers be required to undertake this training as part of mandatory professional development.
- 5.114 An understanding and respect of the culture and language of an Indigenous community is an important part of teacher training. The Committee supports the Queensland Government's focus on cultural training for teachers placed in Indigenous communities or schools with high numbers of Indigenous students.

Recommendation 21 - Compulsory EAL/D training for teaching degrees

- 5.115 **The Committee recommends the Minister for Education take to the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) a proposal to include a compulsory component of English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EAL/D) training for all teaching degrees.**

Recommendation 22 – In-service EAL/D and cultural awareness training

- 5.116 **The Committee recommends the Minister for Education take to the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) a proposal that all teachers already working in schools in Indigenous communities be required to complete in-service EAL/D and cultural awareness training as part of mandatory professional development.**

