

Senate Committee: Education and Employment

QUESTION ON NOTICE Budget Estimates 2015 - 2016

Outcome: Schools and Youth

Department of Education and Training Question No. SQ15-000528

Senator O'Neill, Deborah provided in writing.

Endeavour Language Teacher Fellowship Programme

Question

The Government's election policy says:

"The Coalition will revive the teaching of foreign languages in Australian schools to ensure that at least 40 per cent of Year 12 students are once more studying a language other than English within a decade." (p12)

1. Given the cut of the Endeavour Language Teacher Fellowship Program, what other strategies does the Government have in place to reach this goal?
2. What is the total level of resources allocated by the Government to developing language teachers skills? Please provide a breakdown by program across the forwards?
3. How many additional language teachers will be needed to meet this goal? Is there a strategy in place to support the training of more language teachers?

Answer

The Australian Government is pursuing the actions announced under its *Students First* policy to revive the teaching of foreign languages in schools by:

- continuing to prioritise the development of the national languages curriculum for thirteen foreign languages for study in mainstream schools by 2015; the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority is contracted to develop curriculum (for publication by December 2016) for Hindi, Turkish, Auslan and Classical languages (Latin and Greek)
- giving every preschool child the opportunity to study a foreign language – the Early Learning Languages Australia trial has been rolled out to 41 sites across Australia in 2015
- researching the provision of foreign language education across jurisdictions in senior secondary years.
- improving teacher training courses to put a focus back on languages
- working with the states and territories with the aim of making the study of at least one foreign language from Year 5 to Year 10 compulsory within a decade
- engaging with Teach for Australia to actively recruit for specialist language teachers
- seeking to add specialist language teachers to the Skilled Occupation List.

In response to the Teacher Education Ministerial Action Group (TEMAG) report, *Action Now: Classroom Ready Teachers*, released in February 2015, the Government has tasked the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) to strengthen course accreditation arrangements to make clear what universities need to include in each teacher education course to ensure their teacher education students possess the knowledge and skills they need to be successful in the classroom, paying particular attention to teaching literacy and numeracy.

New course accreditation arrangements will also require universities to make sure that every new primary school teacher graduates with a subject specialisation, with a focus on science, mathematics or a language.

The direct role of the Government in the preparation of language teachers is primarily through the provision of tertiary education. Professional learning for in-service language teachers is primarily the responsibility of the employer of these teachers. The Government does not separately fund this activity.

Robust and consistent data on the numbers of languages teachers in Australian schools are not available.

The TEMAG report found that available teacher workforce data across all areas are inconsistent and must be improved. It recommended that teacher regulatory authorities collect robust workforce data on a nationally consistent basis, including areas of specialisation, to inform workforce planning, and that they share data to contribute to a national workforce dataset and national workforce planning.

In addition, the Government, as part of its response to the TEMAG report has asked AITSL to look at ways to respond to recommendation 18 of the report. Recommendation 18 called for all “higher education providers equip all primary pre-service teachers with at least one subject specialisation, prioritising science, mathematics or a language. Providers publish specialisations available and numbers of graduates from these programmes.”

In response to these recommendations, all Australian governments have agreed to consider next steps to address any gaps in teacher workforce data, including in areas of specialisation such as languages, later this year.