

Senate Standing Committee on Education and Employment - Education

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE Supplementary Budget Estimates 2014-2015

Outcome 2 - Schools and Youth

Department of Education Question No. ED0680_15

Senator O'Neill provided in writing.

Question

Studying languages

With reference to the Government's election commitment to make sure 40 per cent of Year 12 students are studying a language other than English in a decade: - What programs are being put in place to achieve this? What are their targets, milestones and timeframes? - Will any additional resources be invested to achieve these targets? - How many language teachers will be required to achieve this target? Are there currently enough trained language teachers? If not, what strategies will be put in place to address this?

Answer

The Australian Government has instituted a series of measures to support the commitment to ensure 40 per cent of Year 12 students are studying a language other than English in a decade, including:

- Early Learning Languages Australia
The Government is providing \$9.8 million for the Early Learning Languages Australia trial to test the effectiveness of providing preschool children with early exposure to a language other than English through online learning programmes. Children at 40 services that are providing a preschool programme (including some childcare centres) will participate in the one year trial of online language learning in 2015.
- Senior Secondary Languages Education Research Project.
The Department of Education engaged the Asia Education Foundation to undertake research on ways to encourage high school students to continue foreign language study in senior secondary years. The Foundation provided the project's final report on 30 October 2014, and the findings are currently being considered by the Government.
- Continued development of the Australian Curriculum: Languages
The Government is continuing to prioritise the development of Australian Curriculum: Languages, to ensure that all students across Australia who choose to study a language can study it using the same high quality curricula. Research has shown that children who receive high quality language learning experience are more likely to continue study.

Chinese, French, Indonesian and Italian curricula have been completed by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) and available for use on the Australian Curriculum website. Arabic, German, Japanese, Korean, Modern Greek, Spanish and Vietnamese, are due to be finalised by the end of 2014.

In addition, funding of \$1.8 million was provided as part of the 2014-15 Budget for ACARA to develop Hindi, Turkish and Auslan curricula, along with a Framework for Classical Languages, including Classical Greek and Latin exemplar curricula. Hindi and Turkish curricula will be finalised by the end of 2015, with Auslan and Classical Languages by the end of 2016.

- Teach for Australia

The Government is continuing to support the Teach for Australia programme. Under its new contract, Teach for Australia has a target to double the number of language teachers placed in schools from 20 to 40 per cent of its intake. Reaching this target will be dependent on the demand for language teachers from employers.

- Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group

The Government established the Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group in early 2014 to provide advice on how teacher training could be improved. As part of its work, the Advisory Group was asked to consider the preparation of language teachers. The Advisory Group is due to report its findings and recommendations to the Hon Christopher Pyne MP, Minister for Education, in late 2014.

These measures supplement existing initiatives supported by the Government to increase languages teaching and learning in schools including:

- Endeavour Language Teacher Fellowships

The Endeavour Language Teacher Fellowships programme provides practising, pre-service and retraining languages teachers with the opportunity to improve their knowledge, skills and understanding of the languages and cultures about which they teach or will teach.

In January 2015, 68 practicing and pre-service teachers will participate in study programmes overseas for Chinese, French, German, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Spanish and Vietnamese languages.

The Government is providing funding of \$1.2 million for the 2015 programme.

- Community Languages Australia

Funding of \$135,000 was provided for the 2014 calendar year to Community Languages Australia for national coordination of community languages schools.

Community languages schools play an important role in complementing the language programmes taught in mainstream schools. They provide opportunities for students with background in a language other than English to continue to learn the language of their heritage.

- Indonesian for Teachers Initiative

The Government is providing funding of \$300,000 to the University of the Sunshine Coast to support the retraining of 15 school teachers in Indonesian language through the Graduate Certificate Arts (Indonesian) over 2014 and 2015.

Teachers will undertake part of their studies at a university in Indonesia and part on-campus at the University of the Sunshine Coast. The in-country immersion

component will assist to increase the participants' proficiency in the Indonesian language and cultural understanding.

Workforce planning is a responsibility of State and Territories and the non-government sector as employers of teachers. Recent labour market research conducted by the Department of Employment has found that most labour markets for teachers are adequately supplied.¹ However, some employers reported that they experienced difficulty recruiting for specialist teachers in subjects such as mathematics, science, information technology and languages other than English.

¹ Labour Market Research – School Teachers 2013-14, Department of Employment (2014)