



Indigenous languages

April 2008

Purpose

This statement acknowledges the importance of understanding the diversity of Australian Indigenous languages, and the intercultural understandings gained when these Indigenous languages are valued within the Queensland curriculum.

The current Indigenous language situation in Queensland is complex. Over the last 200 years, the language diversity of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples has changed. Active use of Indigenous languages within many communities has declined. A variety of new languages, including dialects and creoles, are now spoken by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students throughout urban and rural Queensland.

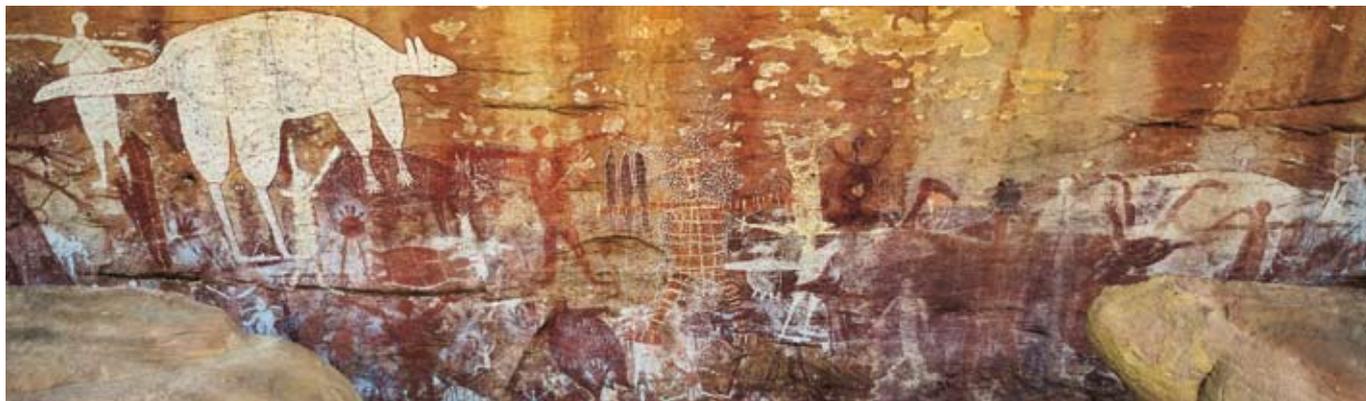
This document articulates the principles that underpin learning about and the teaching of Australian Indigenous languages in Queensland schools. The policy aims to support the personal and cultural identities of young Indigenous students and enhance their life chances and educational successes. It also aims to promote appreciation and understanding of Australian Indigenous languages among all Queensland students by providing curriculum options for schools in the teaching of Australian Indigenous languages.

Principles

All young Queenslanders have the right to an education that meets their needs, and that prepares them for active participation in the creation of a socially just, equitable and democratic global society. This principle is aligned with the range of United Nations (UN) Conventions that Australia has ratified, including the *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child*, and with the *Adelaide Declaration on National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-first Century* (QSA Equity Statement, 2006).

QSA affirms that:

- Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people speak a diversity of languages and dialects other than Standard Australian English
- many Australian Indigenous language speakers are multilingual
- many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students have an Indigenous language or dialect as their first, second or third language
- Australian Indigenous languages are intrinsically linked to the identities, cultures, social values and world views of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language groups and communities
- speakers of Australian Indigenous languages, including students, have distinct ways of describing the world
- Australian Indigenous languages have complex grammars and rich vocabularies
- understanding the language backgrounds of Indigenous students is a critical factor in the successful learning of Standard Australian English as part of formal education in Queensland schools
- it is valuable for all students to understand the language diversity of Australia's Indigenous peoples
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community perspectives on valuing, maintaining and reviving local languages will be supported through our products and services.



Implementation

The QSA Indigenous languages statement will be implemented by:

- distributing the statement to all QSA staff and committees, and discussing how it impacts on their work
- reflecting the principles in all strategic planning processes of the QSA, including the QSA Strategic Plan and annual performance report to the Governing Body
- incorporating the principles of this policy statement into QSA products and services, as appropriate
- providing regular reports on the implementation of this policy statement and the related priorities to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Committee and the P-12 Curriculum Committee for advice and consideration
- revising, in 2011, both this policy statement and the implementation of its principles in QSA functions.

Priorities

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- Engage QSA staff in capacity building and professional development that promotes understanding of the importance of valuing Indigenous languages in education.
- Undertake literature reviews and explore current initiatives in Indigenous languages in Queensland and interstate to identify available models and frameworks to inform QSA activities.
- Research models for the teaching of Indigenous languages within schools.
- Establish community and organisational partnerships for consulting on Indigenous languages syllabus development.
- Develop a background paper and design brief to guide the development of a draft Australian Indigenous Languages P-12 Syllabus.
- Co-develop a draft Australian Indigenous Languages P-12 Syllabus to guide the teaching of Indigenous languages in Queensland schools.
- Establish an advisory strategy to support the development of the Australian Indigenous Languages P-12 Syllabus.
- Identify Indigenous languages perspectives in the revision cycle of the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Senior Syllabus*.
- Embed Indigenous languages perspectives when the English KLA Syllabus is developed.
- Promote the Essential Learnings and Standards for Languages and SOSE, which reflect Indigenous languages perspectives.
- Embed Indigenous language perspectives across the revised KLA syllabuses.
- Trial the English for ESL Learners Senior Syllabus in schools with Indigenous students.
- Promote online resources to raise awareness of Indigenous language perspectives in Queensland.



2009

- Consult on and trial the draft Australian Indigenous Languages P–12 Syllabus.
- Develop guidelines for teaching Australian Indigenous languages in the early years.
- Embed Indigenous language perspectives in the senior syllabuses and support materials.
- Develop and promote resources to support the Australian Indigenous Languages P–12 Syllabus.
- Recognise structured community- and work-based Indigenous language programs for credit towards the QCE.
- Develop an English for ESL Learners Years 1–9 Syllabus for use in schools with Indigenous students.

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- Promote and implement the English for ESL Learners Years 1–9 Syllabus in those schools with Indigenous students.
- Develop syllabus options for Authority-registered and/or Recognised Studies subjects for Years 10–12 in teaching English to Australian Indigenous ESL learners.
- Develop and promote online resources to support embedding Indigenous language perspectives in all Queensland schools curriculum.
- Undertake general implementation of Australian Indigenous Languages P–12 Syllabus.

