

'Language and Culture - A Matter of Survival. Report of the Inquiry into Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Language Maintenance'.

*House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs - June 1992.*

Response to the list of recommendations as they effect the NT.  
Department of Education.

**Language Maintenance Objectives:**

1. Deals with the Commonwealth funding a language awareness campaign for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) communities with living traditional languages.

**Comment:** It has no direct effect on the Department. Local Literature Production Centres and Literacy Centres might choose to assist such a campaign if they are adequately reimbursed for the use their materials and equipment.

2. General public awareness campaign conducted by Commonwealth, States and Territories for ATSI languages and culture.

**Recommended Actions:**

- N/A

**Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Media:**

3. Encourage use of local languages in BRACS.
4. Commonwealth review of the existing resources for BRACS

**Recommended Actions:**

- N/A

**Interpreter Services:**

- 5 - 11. **Comment:** The Centre for Australian Languages and Linguistics (Batchelor College) currently offer training in these skill areas.

**Recommended Actions:**

- N/A

**Teacher Training:**

12. Adequate pre-service training needed.

**Comment:** The NTU require their students to do a 5 point credit unit (most Units are 10 points) called Socio-cultural Foundations Unit 2 that deals with teaching ATSI students. There is no compulsion on students to have any practicums in communities.

13. Specialised Training before being "posted to more traditional communities".

**Comment:** The Department currently runs both Induction and Induction Recall lasting one week each for all new teaching staff. The initial induction of one week covers a wide range of areas for new staff with recruits receiving information about cross-cultural issues in general for NT schools.

14. Prior Training in TESOL before service in remote area community schools. or develop appropriate TESOL inservice training for teachers and teaching assistants.

**Comment:** Recruitment for remote area community schools should target teachers with such skills. Regional ESL advisers assist by visiting schools but the time available is very limited due to people's teaching loads and the generally small school sizes means that the ability of these schools to relieve staff for inservice is extremely difficult.

15. Provision of 'suitable Tertiary programs' and support for students from remote area communities .

**Comment:** Batchelor College higher education course range is increasing but is reliant on Commonwealth funding for course expansion.

**Recommended Actions:**

- (12) Given that graduates from the NTU will be seeking employment in NT schools, the Department as the future employer should be encouraging the NTU to:
  - Maintain the compulsory nature of Socio-cultural Foundations Unit that deals with teaching ATSI students. The unit should also be up-graded to a full semester unit worth 10 credit points.
  - Encourage their students to have one practicum in a remote community.
- (13) Induction for recruits going into remote area communities be extended from One week to two weeks .
- (14) Prior Training in ESL should a recommended prerequisite for teachers going to remote area community schools.

Regional based TESOL inservice for both Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal staff should be a priority. The one pupil-free day per year is unrealistic when trying to provide adequate inservice to teachers from remote area community schools. A combination of pupil free days in conjunction with "stand down" time might be a possible option along with the use of cluster school arrangements.

**Training of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Teachers:**

16. Provision of remote area Teacher training programs and ensuring the maintenance of accreditation standards.

**Comment:** Batchelor College runs an extensive RATE program that is Nationally accredited. This was acknowledged by the Committee.

**Linguistic Training:**

17-21. Highlights the need for general linguistics and interpreter training.

**Comment:** The Committee acknowledges the work of CALL (Batchelor College)

**Recommended Actions:**

- N/A

**Adelaide Conference:**

22 - 24. N/A

**Aboriginal Languages Education Strategy and Aboriginal Literacy Strategy:**

25. The Commonwealth ensure that funds allocated under ALES and ALS are used appropriately by the States and Territories and not used to replace existing mainstream programs funds.

**Comment:** Highlights the concern of the Commonwealth.

26. Ensure that ESL funding is distributed equitably including children in remote community schools.

**Recommended Actions:**

(25) N/A

(26)

**School based language education:**

27. Ensure the availability of Bilingual or Bicultural education if sought by a community and if there there is a sufficient number of speakers.

**Comment:** This NT already implements the spirit of this recommendation but resources are often difficult to access especially in terms of professional support services.

28. Ensure that communities determine the language to be used in their school.

29. Ensure that Bilingual programs are based on maintenance models.

**Comment:** The NT already implements these two recommendations through the Bilingual Accreditation and Appraisal process conducted with each school.

30. Appropriate pay scale for ASTI employee working in language skills areas.

**Comment:** An incremental pay scale approved by the Commonwealth Arbitration Commission based on linguistic study exists for NTPS personnel working in school language programs.

31. DEET in consultation with the states and territories commission the preparation of curriculum material for the teaching of English as a second dialect. This funding would be separate from the ALS.

**Comment:**

32. N/A

33. The Commonwealth ensure that state and territory strategic plans effectively implement Goals 1 and 17 of the AEP.

**Comment:** Goal 17 would need to be included as a funded initiative. This would require it to be directly addressed in the Second Triennium.