



Minister for Employment, Education and Training  
Parliament House, Canberra, ACT, 2600

3 SEP 1991

RECEIVED

30 AUG 1991

MINISTER'S OFFICE

EQ1/1131

The Hon S Stone MLA  
Minister for Education and the Arts  
Minister for Employment and Training  
11th Floor  
NT House  
22 Mitchell Street  
DARWIN NT 0800

Dear Mr Stone

#### AUSTRALIAN LANGUAGE AND LITERACY POLICY

I have pleasure in enclosing for your information an advance copy (photocopied) of the Policy Information ('White') Paper, *Australia's Language: The Australian Language and Literacy Policy*, and its Companion Volume, which I will be releasing in book form on 2 September 1991.

In view of the important role of the States and Territories in implementing the policy, you may appreciate the opportunity to see the paper before it is formally released. Funding arising from the Australian Language and Literacy Policy (ALLP) was contained in the August Budget.

The White Paper has taken into account comments received from your Department during the consultation process, and the views expressed by the Australian Education Council and the Vocational Education, Employment and Training Advisory Committee.

The White Paper addresses principally the goals and rationale for the ALLP, as well as the strategies which will be implemented under it. The Companion Volume elaborates on the details of the policy, particularly background and contextual information.

In summary the White Paper announces a total package for the ALLP OF \$278.46 million in 1991-92, \$320.51 million in 1992-93 and \$333.33 million in 1993-94, combining new and continuing funding. Most programs and program elements will be implemented from 1 January 1992.

Key elements of the package are:

- a.) additional funds for adult ESL, through the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP), of \$10.68 million in 1991-92, \$22.76 million in 1992-93 and \$24.06 million in 1993-94, bringing the total funding for tuition under the AMEP to \$89.18 million in 1991-92, \$100.76 million in 1992-93 and \$102.06 million in 1993-94;
- b.) an increase in adult literacy through funding for the TAFE and community-based providers (totalling \$11.51 million in 1991-92) and literacy for jobseekers. Up to \$21.0 million in 1991-92 will be available through the Special Intervention Program, of which about one half can be expected to support vocational level adult literacy. The remainder will be directed to vocationally oriented adult basic education, including adult ESL and numeracy. \$3.0 million will be available for adult literacy through SkillShare;
- c.) an increase in literacy in the workplace this financial year to \$2.0 million, rising to \$4.0 million in 1992-93 and \$5.0 million in 1993-94 and 1994-95.
- d.) clearer articulation of responsibilities for adult literacy and adult ESL. In summary, my Department will provide vocational level English training through labour market training programs for jobseekers who have already acquired 'minimum social proficiency' in literacy or ESL. As well as maintaining its efforts for other community members, the AMEP will now accept responsibility for bringing the level of English language proficiency of jobseekers to Level 2 on the Australian Second Language Proficiency Rating Scale (ASLPR), regardless of how long they have lived in Australia.  
  
I will ask TAFE and community-based providers to use Commonwealth funding to provide training for jobseekers with literacy difficulties up to minimum social proficiency. An assessment scale is being developed through the Intergovernmental Working Group on Literacy which, when used in conjunction with appropriate assessment processes, will be capable of measuring adult literacy proficiency. It will be used to refer clients to training courses relevant to their particular needs and circumstances;
- e.) additional funding of up to \$10.0 million per year from the 1993 program year for the school-level ESL Program (General Support element). This is to take account of changes in distribution between States and Territories of non-English-speaking background students since the funding formula was first developed in 1983;
- f.) national funding for innovative projects in adult literacy and in languages other than English for children (\$2.5 million each year). Support for children's literacy innovative projects will start in 1992-93 with \$0.38

million, rising to \$0.48 million in 1993-94 and \$0.53 million in 1994-95;

- g.) funding of \$1.0 million in 1991-92, and \$1.5 million in each of 1992-93, 1993-94 and 1994-95, for Early Intervention Strategies, which will assist teachers to address literacy difficulties of children before the end of Year 3;
- h.) in collaboration with the States, the Commonwealth will ensure that all children needing additional literacy assistance are identified by assessment at the end of primary school and at Year 9, then assisted to achieve the skills which the assessment reveals they lack.
- i.) a new program which provides an incentive to systems to encourage students to continue studying selected languages other than English to Year 12. This program, to be known as the Priority Language Incentive, replaces the Australian Second Language Learning Program. Under this initiative, education systems and non-systemic schools will receive a grant of \$300 per student for each student who completed studies at Year 12 (up to 25% of all enrolments) in the previous year in one of up to 8 priority languages selected by the system from a list of 14 (Aboriginal languages, Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Modern Greek, Russian, Spanish, Thai, Vietnamese). The total cost of this initiative in 1992 is estimated to be \$5.43 million, rising to \$6.11 million in 1993 and \$7.66 million in 1994;
- j.) an increase of \$2.17 million in funding for the Ethnic Schools Program, to assist States and school systems with additional costs involved in mainstreaming community language classes. Consultations will be held about the proposed transfer of responsibility for the program to host systems in the case of insertion classes, and to Government systems in the case of the after hours element. Systems are encouraged to work closely with the relevant community groups to assist with the transition;
- k.) funding of \$1.75 million in 1991-92, rising to \$3.0 million per year in 1992-93, for an Aboriginal Languages Initiatives Program which will address measures for language maintenance and development which are not specifically educational in nature. Funding of \$2.625 million in 1992-93, rising to \$5.25 million in 1993-95, will also be provided for Aboriginal literacy and language education through the Aboriginal Education Policy in the 1993-95 Triennium;
- l.) renaming of the National Languages Institute of Australia as the National Language and Literacy Institute of Australia, in conjunction with increased funding (bringing the total to \$1.75 million in 1991-92, rising to \$2.25 million in 1992-93) and an expanded mandate. The NLLIA will be asked to establish two new research networks or centres, one for adult literacy and one for children's

literacy and ESL. The NLLIA will also promote high standards of use of Australian English in public and professional contexts through the Style Council;

- m.) funds for public awareness associated with the policy and to promote the use of plain English (\$0.5 million in 1991-92, decreasing to \$0.4 million in 1992-93);
- n.) establishment of an Asia Education Foundation which will address curriculum requirements for Asian studies in schools (\$0.5 million in 1991-92, rising to \$1.0 million in 1992-93);
- o.) establishment of appropriate Commonwealth, State and Territory collaborative mechanisms through the Australian Education Council and the conference of Ministers of Vocational Education, Employment and Training. AEC and MOVEET will be invited to establish a joint standing committee on language and literacy, which will consider issues arising from implementation of the policy;
- p.) establishment of an Australian Language and Literacy Council within the National Board of Employment, Education and Training. This will assume the language and literacy functions of the former Australian Advisory Council on Languages and Multicultural Education (AACLAME), Asian Studies Council and National Consultative Council for International Literacy Year; and
- q.) establishment of an Asia in Australia Council, which will promote education and training for the Government's business and industry strategy with Asia and ensure that Commonwealth initiatives in this area are coordinated.

The White Paper also contains a number of important proposals which can be implemented within existing programs, such as the National Priority (Reserve) Fund in higher education. These proposals are summarised at Attachment A.

It is not possible here to draw to your attention all aspects of the policy relevant to State and Territory education and training systems. Further consultation and negotiation will be required to ensure full implementation of the ALLP.

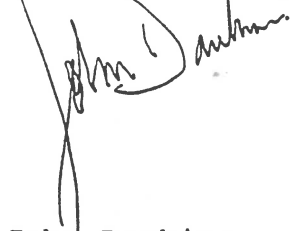
There will be a need for bilateral consultations on implementation of the new arrangements arising from the ALLP. These will occur in conjunction with the normal consultations on school and training sector programs, having regard also to the processes currently in train under the auspices of the Special Premiers' Conference. Your Department will be advised shortly of consultation details.

The officer within my Department with overall responsibility for coordinating policy aspects of the ALLP is Ms Anna Kamarul, Assistant Secretary, Language and Literacy Branch (Telephone: 06 276 7700). She should be advised as soon as possible of a suitable contact who will be responsible for the ALLP within your Department. ||

May I take this opportunity to thank you and officers of your Department for your assistance in developing the Australian Language and Literacy Policy.

I look forward to working with you further on what I consider to be a most important development for Australian education and training.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Dawkins', written over the typed name below.

John Dawkins

## ATTACHMENT A

### **OTHER PROPOSALS IN THE WHITE PAPER**

#### Children's literacy

1. Under the auspices of the Australian Education Council, the Commonwealth will collaborate with State and Territory governments in the development of a national curriculum statement for English language; in establishing national proficiency standards and achievement profiles relevant to the various stages of schooling; and in developing arrangements for the comprehensive assessment of student proficiency in literacy, and for the regular national reporting on progress and results.
2. Over the next three years, the Commonwealth will provide a total of \$150,000 from curriculum appropriations to the Australian Literacy Federation (ALF), which includes the major national professional associations of English teachers, to support the implementation of teacher development activities in line with the national English curriculum statement.
3. The Commonwealth will pursue the improvement of teacher training courses to ensure that English literacy education is properly addressed in the preparation of all teachers through the National Project on the Quality of Teaching and Learning, and through a Special Conference of Teacher Training Providers to be held in 1991 in consultation with this Project.

#### Adult Literacy

4. The Commonwealth will collaborate with the States and Territories through the Australian Education Council and the Conference of Ministers of Vocational Education, Employment and Training in establishing nationally consistent arrangements for curriculum development, teacher training, standards development, assessment and reporting.
5. The Commonwealth will support staff development and the development of training materials for adult literacy courses, through the Australian Committee on TAFE Curriculum. In the higher education sector, when identifying priority areas for the funding of projects under the National Priority (Reserve) Fund, it will also take into account the critical need for an increased number of trained literacy workers in the allocation of any

additional higher education student places funded by the Government.

#### Children's ESL

6. The Commonwealth will work with the States and Territories to develop an agreed proficiency scale to enable schools to provide the greatest support to those in need.

#### Adult ESL

7. The Commonwealth will reorient the Advanced English for Migrants Program and associated living allowances to provide vocational level ESL assistance to jobseekers.

#### Languages other than English

8. The Commonwealth will take account of the continuing need to promote Asian languages and teacher education in other languages when identifying priority areas for the allocation of any additional student places which it funds in higher education and for the funding of projects under the National Priority (Reserve) Fund.
9. The Commonwealth will continue to give priority in funding allocations through the Australian Committee on TAFE Curriculum to the development of appropriate materials for the teaching of languages other than English in the TAFE and adult community education sectors.