Rationale

The overall rationale for learning Aboriginal languages and Torres Strait Islander languages in Australian schools is that they are the original languages of this country. Through learning them, all students gain access to knowledge and understanding of Australia that can only come from an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander perspective. The languages by their nature embed this perspective. Learning to use these unique languages can play an important part in the development of a strong sense of identity, pride and self-esteem for all Australian students.

Each Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language is unique to the Country/Place on which it arose. It gives voice to the landscapes, thoughts and ways of seeing and interpreting the world. When the language of the land is spoken, it brings together all of the elements of the landscape and its people. It encompasses the relationships of these people with one another and with the landscape, past, present and future. The learning of an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander language incorporates the realities of its people and facilitates students' deep engagement with knowledge, ways of being and ways of knowing. It develops in students an understanding of historical, current and ongoing connection to Country/Place and culture. Aboriginal languages and Torres Strait Islander languages are fundamental to the identity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and this is recognised throughout the Framework. It is also the right of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to have access to education in and about their own languages, as enshrined in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Education systems can play a vital role in facilitating access to language learning and supporting community language revival and maintenance and revitalisation of these languages also contribute to reconciliation.

Learning Aboriginal languages and Torres Strait Islander languages meets the needs and rights of young people to learn their own languages and recognises the significance of these languages in the language ecology of Australia. For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, learning their own language is crucial to their overall learning and achievements. It enables them to develop a wider recognition and understanding of their language, culture, Country and Place, land, water, sea and sky, and this contributes to their wellbeing. For all students, learning Aboriginal languages and Torres Strait Islander languages provides a distinctive means of understanding the Country/Place in which they live, including the relationship between land, the environment and people. The ongoing and necessary revival, maintenance and development of these languages also contribute to reconciliation.

Aboriginal languages and Torres Strait Islander languages are complex and diverse. Engaging with the study of an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander language will develop communication skills in the language studied and will also contribute to the intellectual enrichment of students. For non-Indigenous students, the study of an Aboriginal language or Torres Strait Islander language will provide intellectual challenge and development while also giving them insight into and understanding of Indigenous Australian cultures and knowledge. In some cases it will provide these students with the opportunity to communicate with Indigenous Australians in their own language. In other cases, in addition to communication skills, it will give insight into language change and language revival within its historical context.

The government report 'Our Land Our Languages' (House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, Commonwealth of Australia, September 2012), found that there is an ongoing and close relationship between the work of communities to maintain and revive their languages and that of schools as vehicles for language instruction. The study 'Indigenous Languages Programs in Australian Schools: A Way Forward' (Purdie et al., 2008,) found that over 16 000 Indigenous students and 13 000 non-Indigenous students located in 260 Australian schools were involved in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages programs.

The opportunity to learn an Aboriginal language and/or a Torres Strait Islander language is becoming available in an increasing number of Australian schools, and an aim of this Framework is to make that option available for all students. In this way, all students will have the opportunity to benefit from the social and intellectual development that results from this learning.

Year 3 to 6 Achievement Standard

The achievement standards for the Framework for Aboriginal Languages and Torres Strait Islander Languages First Language Learner Pathway are generalised in order to cater for the range of languages that may be learnt as an L1 in the school context. The achievement standards will need to be adapted for use for specific Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages.

By the end of Year 6, students use spoken and written language to share and compare experiences, personal perspectives and points of view on topics related to their immediate environment and personal, cultural and social worlds. They use appropriate ways of talking when interacting in different social situations and with different social groups, and apply principles and protocols of cultural safety when engaging with cultural property. Students participate in class discussion, asking questions to clarify content and to offer opinions and ideas and taking into account other perspectives. They locate, classify and compare information from a range of sources relating to Country/Place, community, culture, environment and past and present ways of living. They interact with Country/Place under the guidance of Elders and older family members, making and recording observations in different formats, reading signs, classifying natural objects according to Indigenous cultural categories and mapping key topographical features. They respond to stories, songs, dances and artistic expression by describing how events, characters and settings are depicted through sound, image and performance, by interpreting messages conveyed through these forms and by sharing opinions, responses and reactions. They understand that ownership of songs, stories, dances and designs is determined by traditional kinship and other social groupings, as well as by place, History and story. Students create, with the support of models, a variety of spoken, written and multimodal texts for different purposes and audiences. They use descriptive and expressive language to write narratives and expressive and imaginative texts, and to recount experiences. They use specialised language to present information on specific topics, for example by presenting research-based factual reports. They use procedural language, for example to explain how to prepare and cook food, how to make tools, decorate artefacts or play a game. They apply their grammatical and vocabulary knowledge and their understanding of spelling and punctuation conventions in a range of sentence and text types. They translate familiar texts, identifying and explaining culture-specific concepts and expressions. They create bilingual/multilingual texts for the school community on a range of topics. They explain the family basis of the kin and skin systems and their role in determining social behaviour. They elaborate their own positions and identities within these systems, explaining their roles and responsibilities with respect to caring for family, land/sea/water. They explain links between ceremonies, people, stories and ancestral areas of Country/Place. They identify places which have special significance to particular sub-groups in the community and which represent special bonds between people, place and story.

Students know that the language has its own rules for pronunciation, spelling and grammar and they apply this knowledge to predict the sound, spelling and meaning of new words and to create their own texts. They read aloud with developing fluency and intonation. Students use metalanguage to explain language features and elements, using appropriate grammatical terms and making comparisons with English and other known languages. They explain how language use is adjusted to suit different contexts, situations and relationships, for example, registers of deference and respect, avoidance language, speaking to the side, indirect references, generational differences and the use of silence. They provide examples of how languages change over time by identifying words borrowed from English and other languages, including words that are similar to or borrowed from neighbouring Indigenous languages. Students understand that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages are in various states of maintenance, development and revival and can explain some historical reasons for this. They recognise the importance of maintaining and strengthening Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages for their community and for the broader Australian community and describe ways that language and culture have been maintained and strengthened in their community. They reflect on their own ways of communicating, discussing how these might be interpreted by others.

Aims

The Australian Curriculum: Framework for Aboriginal Languages and Torres Strait Islander Languages aims to develop the knowledge, understanding and skills necessary to ensure that students:

- communicate in the language
- understand language, culture, and learning and their relationship, and thereby develop an intercultural capability in communication
- understand themselves as communicators
- understand the process of language building as a means to extend the potential of the language (in vocabulary, expression and discourse) and to develop knowledge of linguistic techniques (such as, collecting, describing and recording language), including processes of language revival.

These four aims are interrelated and provide the basis for the two organising strands: Communicating and Understanding.

Structure

Pathways

To cater for differences between the ecologies of languages and the communities who are owners and custodians of those languages, and to cater for students who come from a variety of learner backgrounds, the Framework has three pathways:
•First Language Learner Pathway (L1)
•Second Language Learner Pathway (L2)
•Language Revival Learner Pathway (LR).

This approach recognises that the two key variables are 'the learner' and 'the nature of the language'.

The Framework is designed to be flexible in use for developing language-specific curricula and programs. Aspects of the content and achievement standards from the various learner pathways can be selected, adapted and modified in ways that best suit a particular language, to ensure that the curriculum and subsequent programs are appropriately pitched and to recognise the nature of the language, the nature of the learners and the context of learning.

First Language Learner Pathway (L1)

Languages studied in the First Language Learner Pathway (L1) are typically used in spoken form as the language of everyday communication by whole communities across all generations.

Typically, but not exclusively, L1 programs will occur on Country/Place and will have constant involvement from a variety of speakers from the community. A key expectation in the L1 pathway is that of students having opportunities to interact with Elders and particular places on Country/Place.

Learners are typically Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander children who have learnt the language from their families as a first language and continue to use it naturally at home and play. Students may have varying skills in other languages, including varieties of English.

The First Language Learner Pathway provides students with an opportunity to study a first language at school. For these students, having the opportunity to learn their own language at school supports their cognitive development and signals recognition of the value and status of their language and ways of using and understanding language. Learning and using one's own language at school also meets a widely held community aim to strengthen students' identity and their connection between their families, community and Country/Place. Students develop language skills to expand the domains of use in the language. This includes developing skills in registers and genres not normally encountered in their family and home community; in effect, this may involve the students in the creative development of new registers/genres, vocabulary and expressions in the language. As well as continuing to develop, extend and strengthen oracy, a key feature of the First Language Learner pathway is the development of written literacy.

The curriculum content and achievement standards in the First Language Learner Pathway are generalised in order to cater for the range of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander languages that may be learnt as a first language. The curriculum content and achievement standards will need to be adapted when developing language-specific curricula, and will need to be modified if the program occurs off-Country.

Second Language Learner Pathway (L2)

Languages studied in the Second Language Learner Pathway (L2) are typically languages used in spoken form as the language of everyday communication by whole communities across all generations.

The second language learner pathway has been written on the assumption that learning will occur off-Country, involving students who are typically not from the language community and having little or no experience of the language and culture. They are introduced to learning the language at school as an additional, new language.

The language chosen for curriculum development should have a sizeable set of resources in a variety of media, such as local documentaries, bilingual narrative and descriptive texts, and educational materials in print and digital form. Learning is enriched and authenticated by interaction with visiting Elders and community speakers, and where possible visits to Country/Place. Information and communications technologies provide additional resources to support a range of language and culture experiences.

The Second Language Learning Pathway provides students with an opportunity to study a language that is structurally very different from English and one from a culture quite distant from the English-speaking mainstream. This develops a deeper appreciation of the nature and diversity of languages and cultures, and supports the acquisition of knowledge and skills necessary to learn and understand an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander language and its cultural context.

For students who are from the language community but who did not grow up speaking the language, it is an opportunity to reaffirm their cultural identity through learning the language of their community.

The curriculum content and achievement standards in the Second Language Learner Pathway are generalised in order to cater for the range of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander languages that may be learnt as a second language. The content descriptions, content elaborations and achievement standards for the Second Language Learner Pathway will need to be adapted for use with the particular language being taught and will need to be modified if the program occurs on-Country or if the learners are from the language community.

Language Revival Learner Pathway (LR)

The Language Revival Learner Pathway (LR) provides opportunities for students to study Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander languages that are being revived by their owners or custodians and are in various stages of revitalisation, r and reclamation.

LR covers a much broader range of language types and ecologies than either L1 or L2, and the vast majority of Abo languages and Torres Strait Islander Languages are included in the LR category.

Schools teaching the Language Revival Learner Pathway (LR) will most likely be located broadly within the geograp region of the language and culture, sometimes in towns and cities and other times in rural and remote regions. Clas likely include students who relate closely to the language and culture as well as students with varying degrees of aff with the language and culture, including some with no connections to the language and culture. A key expectation in LR pathway is that students have opportunities to interact with Elders and particular places on Country/Place.

The Language Revival Learner Pathway draws on the Australian Indigenous Languages Framework (AILF) and take account key variables such as: how much is known about and documented for the language; the extent to which languages are used or remembered, ranging from languages no longer spoken (owners often use the term 'sleeping those spoken fluently by members of the older generations; and the extent to which languages have been reintroduce the community of owners and custodians.

These variables give rise to the following broad categories of language revival:

- Language Revitalisation: where there are fluent L1 speakers (typically members of the older generation) intergenerational transmission of the language has been interrupted. In this case, younger generations understand some of the language and may use some words and phrases but they do not speak it as the language. Examples of revitalisation languages include: Walmajarri in the Kimberley, Yindjibarndi in the Pilbara, Meriam in the Torres Strait, Dyirbal in north-eastern Queensland, Wubuy (Nunggubuyu) in Arnh Land, and Adnyamathanha (Yura Ngawarla) in the Flinders Ranges. .
- Language Renewal: where there are a number of adult speakers who use the language to varying degre the community, but not 'right through', and where other language resources are drawn upon. Examples o languages being renewed include: Noongar in south-west Western Australia, Gumbaynggirr on the north of New South Wales, Ngarrindjeri on the Lower Murray Lakes in South Australia, Djabugay in the Atherto Tablelands in northern Queensland and Yugambeh in southern Queensland. .
- Language Reclamation: where language revival by necessity relies primarily on historical documentatio language in the absence of active community knowledge of it. Examples of reclamation languages includ Kaurna from Adelaide, Narungga from the Yorke Peninsula, Dharuk or Eora (Iyora) from Sydney, Yuwib from central Queensland, Wemba-Wemba and Woiwurrung from Victoria, and Awabakal from the Newca area in New South Wales.

Year 3 to 6 Level Description

The nature of the learner, the pathway and particular language

Languages studied in the First Language Learner Pathway (L1) are typically used in spoken form as the language of everyday communication by whole communities across all generations.

Typically, but not exclusively, L1 programs will occur on Country/Place and will have constant involvement from a variety of speakers from the community. A key expectation in the L1 pathway is that of students having opportunities to interact with Elders and particular places on Country/Place.

Learners are typically Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander children who have learnt the language from their families as a first language and continue to use it naturally at home and play. Students may have varying skills in other languages, including varieties of English.

The curriculum content and achievement standards in the First Language Learner Pathway are generalised in order to cater for the range of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander languages that may be learnt as a first language. The curriculum content and achievement standards will need to be adapted when developing language-specific curricula, and will need to be modified for programs occuring off-Country.

Learners at this level are expanding their social networks, experiences and communicative repertoire in the language. They benefit from varied, activity-based learning that builds on their interests and capabilities and makes connections with other areas of learning. The curriculum ensures that learning experiences and activities are flexible enough to cater for learner variables while being appropriate for learners' general cognitive and social levels.

Language learning and use

Students interact with peers, the teaching team, Elders and community members in a variety of learning experiences and activities. They continue to build vocabulary that relates to a wider range of domains, such as curriculum areas that involve some specialised language use.

Students engage in a range of listening activities and build oral proficiency through responding to rich language input and opportunities to engage in meaningful communicative activities. They follow instructions, exchange information and express ideas and feelings related to their immediate environment and personal worlds. They participate in shared tasks, performance and play.

Students' development of written literacy progresses from supported comprehension and use of high-frequency and personally significant sight words to more elaborated simple texts which take account of context, purpose and audience. The development of reading skills and textual knowledge is supported through interaction with a range of spoken, written, visual and multimodal texts, including sign language as appropriate.

At upper primary level, learners use the language for a widening range of purposes: collaborating, creating, performing and responding to resources and experiences. They have greater control of vocabulary and grammatical resources and use an increasingly sophisticated range of non-verbal strategies to support communication. Shared learning activities develop social, cognitive and language skills and provide a context for purposeful language experience and experimentation.

Oracy development includes listening to a range of varied language input from different sources and building more elaborated conversational and interactional skills. These include initiating and sustaining conversations, reflecting on and responding to others' contributions, making appropriate responses and adjustments, and engaging in debate and discussion. Individual and group oral presentation and performance skills are developed through researching and organising information, structuring and resourcing presentation of content, and selecting appropriate language to engage a particular audience.

At this level, there is focused attention on language structures and systems. Learners draw on more established grammatical and lexical resources to compose and comprehend more complex language. With support they build increasing cohesion and complexity into their writing in terms of both content and expression. They use ICT to support their learning in more independent and intentional ways and make comparisons between the language they are learning and other languages they speak or are learning, including English.

Contexts of interaction

Learning occurs largely through interaction with peers and the teaching team. Additional enrichment and authentication of learning experience is provided through interactions with Elders and other speakers living in the community. Interacting with Country/Place and exploring the environment with Elders and other community members is essential to learning at all stages. Students may also have access to community facilities and functions, such as the health clinic, art centre, coast patrol, local interpretative centre, and the office of the park ranger or land council.

Elders and community members may teach about cultural elements of language and communication, such as gender-differentiated roles, working separately with male and female students when appropriate.

Students may have some access to speakers of the language or related languages in other communities and regions through digital technologies.

Texts and resources

Country/Place and the community are the most important resources for learning the language. They are the origin of most of the texts and communicative situations students engage with.

Learners interact with a growing range of spoken, visual, written and digital texts, including photographs, maps, oral histories, community texts such as posters from health clinics, community notices, land-care programs, songs, raps, dances, stories, painting and visual design, music, video clips and films.

Level of support

While learners work more independently at this level, ongoing support is incorporated into task activity and the process of learning is supported by systematic feedback and review. Form-focused activities build student's grammatical knowledge and support the development of accuracy and control in written language. Opportunities to use this knowledge in meaningful activities build communicative skills, confidence and fluency. Tasks are carefully scaffolded: teachers provide models and examples; introduce language, concepts and resources needed to manage and complete learning activities; make time for experimentation, drafting and redrafting; and provide support for self-monitoring and reflection. Discussion supports learning and develops children's conceptual frame for talking about systems of language and culture.

While learners are becoming more autonomous and independent at the upper primary years, ongoing support is still needed, including explicit instruction, structured modelling and scaffolding, and provision of appropriate stimulus materials and timely feedback. Learning experiences incorporate implicit form-focused language learning activities and examples of texts and tasks.

The role of languages

The language of study is the principal medium of instruction in First Language Learner Pathway classrooms. Other known languages play a complementary role, for example, used when translating, creating bilingual/multilingual texts or comparing and contrasting writing systems, language structures and language features and use.

Year 3 to 6 Content Descriptions

Communicating

Socialising

Interact with others, sharing and comparing experiences, personal perspectives and points of view on topics related to immediate environment and personal world.
[Key concepts, family, community, relationships, interaction protocols, experience, health and well-being, personal and cultural safety; Key processes: sharing, participating, recounting, discussing]

Plan and participate in collaborative activities and events, negotiating and performing different roles and responsibilities that are appropriate to local cultural traditions.
[Key concepts: collaboration, experience, shared decision making; Key processes: making arrangements, designing, making, planning, suggesting, negotiating]

Participate in classroom interactions that involve some changes to ways of communicating at school and the development of learning related language and interaction patterns.
[Key concepts: interaction patterns, cooperation, domains of language use, agreement/disagreement, reflection; Key processes: working together, contributing, enquiring, building language, monitoring, clarifying, acknowledging, explaining]

Informing

Gather, organise and compare information from a range of sources relating to Country/Place, community and past and present ways of living.
[Key concepts: past and present, natural environment, caring for Country/Place, social and cultural events, health and well-being; Key processes: enquiring, investigating, comparing, describing, tracking, mapping, measuring, charting, explaining, analysing]

Convey information on specific topics using formats such as oral or digital presentations, displays, diagrams, timelines, narratives, descriptions and procedures.
[Key concepts: Country/Place, community life, identities; Key processes: creating, editing, presenting, profiling, sequencing]

Creating

Listen to, read and view a variety of texts, describing and discussing key elements, ideas, characters, events and messages, making connections with own life and experiences.
[Key concepts: visual design, representation, journey; Key processes: participating, describing, predicting, recalling, responding, listening, shared/guided reading; Key text types: songs, raps, dances, traditional and contemporary stories, paintings and visual design, video clips]

Create, present and perform expressive and imaginative texts that involve different modes of presentation, such as stories, dance, skits or video clips, based on a stimulus concept, theme or resource.
[Key concepts: imagination, entertainment; Key processes: imagining, creating, experimenting, performing, storytelling; Key text types: raps, songs, dances, performances, digital texts, video clips, skits, paintings and visual design]

Translating

Translate short texts from the language into other known languages and vice versa, including the register of sign language, noticing words or expressions that are not easy to translate and identifying elements which require explanation rather than literal translation.
[Key concepts: equivalence, meaning, culture-specific concepts; Key processes: identifying, translating, transcribing, predicting, deducing, selecting, comparing, explaining]

Create bilingual/multilingual texts for the classroom and the school community, such as records of excursions and shared learning experiences, songs, photo stories, posters, brochures, maps.
[Key concepts: bilingualism, expression; Key processes: creating, performing, describing, code-mixing]

Identity

Describe kinship relations as a system and explain its role in determining social behaviour.
[Key concepts: identity, relationship, kinship, family terms, social groupings/sub-groupings, story, behaviour, ways of talking; Key processes: investigating, explaining, describing, categorising]

Interact with Country/Place, for example, by discussing roles within the family, ownership, custodial and totemic affiliations, and links between History, social groups and natural species.
[Key concepts: Country/Place, identity, significance, family, Dreaming/History, totemic affiliation, role connections; Key processes: identifying, naming, describing]

Describe and explain behaviour, rights and responsibilities in relation to the kinship ownership of songs, stories, dances and designs.
[Key concepts: identity, rights, responsibilities, ownership, behaviour; Key processes: describing, explaining, discussing]

Reflecting

Notice and describe similarities and differences in ways of using language and interacting with people when communicating in the language and in other known languages, including English.
[Key concepts: language, culture, values, similarity and difference, communication, emotion; Key processes: noticing, comparing, describing, reflecting]

Understanding

Systems of Language

Compare and use the patterns of speech sounds, intonation and rhythm in the language and learn the written forms of these and associated conventions [Key concepts: sound system, writing system, intonation, rhythm, sound–symbol correspondence, punctuation, conventions, alphabetic order; Key processes: listening, recognising, comparing, reading aloud, transcribing]

Understand and describe the word formation processes in the language, including the use of prefixes and suffixes [Key concepts: word formation, word class, grammatical person and number, negation, metalanguage; Key processes: noticing, comparing, applying, understanding, modifying meaning]

Understand that texts such as stories, paintings, songs and dances have a distinct purpose and particular language features, and understand and apply text conventions [Key concepts: purpose, language features; Key processes: recognising, identifying, distinguishing, applying, linking]

Language variation and change

Understand that speakers vary language forms and styles according to kin relationship and context [Key concepts: kinship, respect, register, silence, taboo; Key processes: observing, examining, explaining, investigating, noticing, recognising]

Recognise that languages change over time [Key concepts: language shift, language loss, borrowing and relatedness; Key processes: identifying, recognising]

Language awareness

Explore the language situation of their community and the diversity of language situations in Australia [Key concepts: change, sign; Key processes: recognising, discussing, investigating]

Understand that the use of stories and names in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages is culturally determined[Key concepts: cultural safety; Key processes: recognising, observing, discussing]

Role of language and culture

Reflect on how a community's ways of using language are shaped by values and beliefs [Key concepts: Country/Place, cultural expression, transmission, value, belief, spirituality; Key processes: observing, making connections, discussing, investigating]

Role of language and building

Understand ways the language and culture can be maintained and strengthened in changing contexts [Key concepts: language maintenance and development ; Key processes: discussing, exploring, considering, investigating, language building]