

**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: Language Learning in Indigenous Communities' (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.

**Foundation to Year 2 Achievement Standard**

The achievement standards for the Framework for Aboriginal Languages and Torres Strait Islander Languages LR pathway are generalised in order to cater for the wide range of languages which may be learnt as an LR within the school context. The achievement standards will need to be adapted for use for specific Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages. The Achievement Standards in the Language Revival Learner Pathway will be shaped by the current progress of language revival for a particular language, and by the amount of vocabulary and variety of language structures available for teaching and learning. By the end of Year 2, students interact with the teaching team, Elders and community members to talk about themselves and family, using familiar modelled language and gestures. They use appropriate protocols when interacting with Elders and community speakers, such as appropriate forms of address, terms of respect and behaviour. They use movement, gestures and modelled questions and responses to participate in guided group activities, for example, collaborating to adapt and perform action songs. They interact in familiar classroom exchanges, using routine classroom language, movement, gesture and action, for example when requesting objects, responding to simple questions, following instructions. They identify key information about Country/Place, under the guidance of Elders and community members. They use simple statements, gestures and written captions to demonstrate their understanding of Country/Place, for example, by naming bush foods, animals, plants and natural objects, and by classifying and labelling these into culturally appropriate categories. They identify places in the local area which have names in the language. They respond to texts such as stories, songs, dance and visual art through singing, miming, play-acting, drawing, action and movement. They demonstrate their understanding by identifying key animals, birds and other characters or by retelling/describing elements of images, performances or stories. Students use familiar words, patterns and support materials to create and present shared stories, songs and performances. They translate and explain the meaning of symbols, words, simple phrases and gestures used in everyday contexts and situations. They create simple bilingual texts for the classroom environment. They identify markers of their own identity, such as family, school/class membership and language/s spoken, and compare these to the importance of Place, family and relationships in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Students identify similarities and differences in the ways people communicate and behave in different languages and cultures. Students are familiar with most sounds in the target language and can link these to written symbols and writing conventions. They use metalanguage to describe basic structures of the language, recognising that some elements may have fallen into disuse and be unknown today. They understand that messages in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages can be communicated in a number of ways, such as Elders' story-telling, or through song, dance and visual design. Students identify elements of the kinship system when appropriate, and recognise that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have their own personal relationships with Place, natural species and phenomena. They identify which stories belong to which natural features, including animals and plants. They know that different words are used to address and communicate with different people, depending on relationship and situation. They identify words in the language that have been borrowed from other languages. They recognise that many different languages are spoken at their school, in their local community, and in other parts of Australia. They identify how language use reflects where and how they live and what is important to them. Students identify the importance of learning Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages, including the benefits to communities of language revival. They recognise that new words can be formed from within the language itself and work with the community language team to build resources for the language, such as new games and songs.

**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, renewal and reclamation.

LR covers a much broader range of language types and ecologies than either L1 or L2, and the vast majority of Aboriginal 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 geographical region of the language and culture, sometimes in towns and cities and other times in rural and remote regions. Classes will likely include students who relate closely to the language and culture as well as students with varying degrees of affiliation with the language and culture, including some with no connections to the language and culture. A key expectation in the 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 takes into 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') to those spoken fluently by members of the older generations; and the extent to which languages have been reintroduced into 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) but intergenerational transmission of the language has been interrupted. In this case, younger generations may understand some of the language and may use some words and phrases but they do not speak it as their first 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 Arnhem 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 degrees in the community, but not 'right through', and where other language resources are drawn upon. Examples of languages being renewed include: Noongar in south-west Western Australia, Gumbaynggirr on the north coast of New South Wales, Ngarrindjeri on the Lower Murray Lakes in South Australia, Djabugay in the Atherton Tablelands in northern Queensland and Yugambah in southern Queensland. .
- Language Reclamation: where language revival by necessity relies primarily on historical documentation of the language in the absence of active community knowledge of it. Examples of reclamation languages include: Kaurna from Adelaide, Narungga from the Yorke Peninsula, Dharuk or Eora (Iyora) from Sydney, Yuwibara from central Queensland, Wemba-Wemba and Woiwurrung from Victoria, and Awabakal from the Newcastle area in New South Wales.

## Foundation to Year 2 Level Description

### The nature of the learner, the pathway and particular language

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

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

Schools offering the Language Revival Learner Pathway (LR) will most likely be located broadly within the geographical region of the language and culture, sometimes in towns and cities, other times in rural and remote regions. Classes will likely include students who relate closely to the language and culture, as well as students with varying degrees of affiliation with the language and culture, and some students who have no connections with either the language or culture. A key expectation in the LR pathway is that of students having 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 takes into account key variables such as: how much is known about and documented for the language; the extent to which it is languages used or remembered, ranging from languages no longer spoken (owners often use the term 'sleeping') to those spoken fluently by members of the older generations; and the extent to which it has been reintroduced into 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) but where the intergenerational transmission of the language has been interrupted. Younger generations may understand some of the language and may use some words and phrases but do not speak it as their first 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 Arnhem 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 degrees in the community, but not 'right through', and where there are other language resources to draw upon. Examples of languages being renewed include Noongar in south-west Western Australia, Gumbaynggirr on the north coast of New South Wales, Ngarrindjeri on the Lower Murray Lakes in South Australia, Djabugay in the Atherton Tablelands in northern Queensland, and Yugambah in southern Queensland.

**Language Reclamation** : where language revival, by necessity, relies primarily on historical documentation of the language in the absence of active community knowledge of it. Examples of reclamation languages include Kaurna from Adelaide, Narungga from the Yorke Peninsula, Dharuk or Eora (Iyora) from Sydney, Yuwibara from central Queensland, Wemba-Wemba and Woiwurrung from Victoria, and Awabakal from the Newcastle area in New South Wales.

A number of factors and variables will need to be considered when planning for a language revival curriculum or program, and further information on these is presented in the context statement for this pathway and in the section Using the Framework.

Children enter the early years of schooling with established communication skills in one or more languages and varying degrees of acquisition of early literacy. Learning typically focuses on learners' immediate world of family, home, school, friends and local environment. They are learning how to socialise with new people, share with others, and participate in structured routines and activities at school.

### Language learning and use

The language is learnt in parallel with English language and literacy. Learning in the two areas progresses at very different levels, but each supports and enriches the other.

As the program is likely to be on Country/Place, links can be made to local places of significance, local families, and local histories.

The language is used as much as possible in classroom interactions, routines and activities, supported by the use of visual and concrete materials, gestures and body language. At this stage, there is a focus on play and imaginative activities, games, music, movement and familiar routines, which provide scaffolding and context for language development.

Oral language is developed through listening to the sounds, shapes and patterns of the language, through activities such as rhymes, songs, clapping and action games, and through imitating and repeating sounds in aural texts and as modelled by the teaching team, visiting Elders and community speakers.

Learners experiment with simple formulaic expressions, single-idea phrases and with one- or two-word responses to prompts and cues. As they progress to using language for interactions such as greetings, asking for help, talking about self, friends and family, or asking and answering questions, they notice that language behaves differently in different situations. Creative play provides opportunities for exploring these differences and for using language for purposeful interaction.

Students learn about Country/Place and community by interacting with Elders and community members, by exploring Country/Place, and by engaging with stories, songs and other texts such as videos, maps, and pictures. They learn about the concepts of kin and social groupings.

Students learn to use appropriate respect terms and to demonstrate respectful and appropriate behaviour when interacting with Elders, community speakers and community texts. Learners for whom the language is their heritage language develop a stronger sense of their own group and individual identity through the study of the language and culture.

Students learn to recognise letters that represent the sounds of the language. They write by tracing and copying, forming letters legibly. They learn to read and write words and sentences independently, using modelled language, for example, matching pictures with single words, labels and captions. The use of repetition and recycling in instruction helps children to identify high-frequency words and simple phrases and to recognise the purpose and intention of simple texts.

Students begin to understand how the language works, and compare it with English and other known languages. They understand its place in the context of broader regional and national language diversity. They learn about their role in developing resources for the language, for example by working with the community language team to create new games and songs in language, understanding how such efforts support the language to grow.

### Contexts of interaction

Across Foundation to Year 2, learning occurs largely through interaction with peers and the teaching team, supplemented by some access to Elders and others affiliated with the language for additional enrichment and authentication of the learning experience. Interacting with Country/Place and exploring the environment with Elders and other community members is essential to language learning at all stages, but is particularly important during this early establishment phase, when learning is grounded in the familiar and understanding of language as lived experience is so important.

### Texts and resources

Country/Place and its associated community are the most important resources for learning. They are the origin of most of the texts children engage with.

Texts include a variety of spoken, visual, written and digital resources, which are short, clearly structured, and supported by visuals and paralinguistic elements such as tone of voice, facial expression, body gesture. They include repetition and recycling of structures and vocabulary.

Children listen and respond to teacher talk, share ideas and join in with songs, stories and different forms of play, performance, conversations and other language-mediated activities. Print and digital texts include word lists, place names, stories, shared Big Books, songs, photos, videos, environmental maps and wall charts. Teacher-generated materials include games and items from the community and local environment. Some texts involve English or another community language in a complementary role, filling in for items or expressions that have not yet been reconstituted in the language. Other texts will be bilingual, with no mixing of languages.

### Level of support

Learning is supported via the provision of experiences that are challenging but achievable with appropriate scaffolding and support. This involves modelling, monitoring and moderating by the teacher; provision of multiple and varied sources of input; opportunities for revisiting, recycling and reviewing learned language; and continuous cueing, feedback, response and encouragement.

### The role of languages

Learners are encouraged to use the language whenever possible in class interactions and daily routines with the teaching team, Elders and community members. Maximal use of the language will increase learners' language proficiency and enhance the language revival process.

English and other known languages are used for explanation and discussion, allowing learners to talk about differences and similarities they notice between the language and their first language(s) and culture(s), to ask questions about language and culture, to consider how they feel when they hear or use the language, and to talk about how they view different languages and the people who speak them. This introduction to the 'meta' dimension of intercultural learning develops the ability to consider different perspectives and ways of being as mediated by language.

For revival languages that are at the 'beginning' end of the revival spectrum, English or another community language might be used in a complementary fashion, for example, to fill in for missing words or expressions. Alternatively, language owners and the community in general may decide to side-step these gaps altogether, thus avoiding the need to use other languages for these purposes.

## Foundation to Year 2 Content Descriptions

### Communicating

#### Socialising

Interact with each other, the teaching team and visiting Elders/community members, using language and gestures to greet and talk about self and family.

[Key concepts: self, family and relationships; Key processes: interacting, sharing]

Participate in guided group activities, such as games, songs and simple tasks, using movement and gestures to support understanding and to convey meaning.

[Key concepts: cooperation, play; Key processes: turn-taking, matching, choosing, cooperating, following instructions]

Interact in classroom routines and respond to teacher instructions.

[Key concepts: routine, instruction; Key processes: participating, responding, following instructions]

#### Informing

Discover key information about Country/Place by exploring Country/Place and listening to stories from Elders and community members.

[Key concepts: natural and built environment, community life, Indigenous knowledge; Key processes: listening, observing, identifying, sorting, matching, labelling]

Give factual information using simple statements, gestures and captions.

[Key concepts: Country/Place, community life; Key processes: labelling, describing, presenting, recounting]

#### Creating

Participate in shared listening to, viewing and reading of texts and respond through singing, miming, play-acting, drawing, action and movement.

[Key concepts: storytelling, response; Key processes: responding, performing, sharing, expressing; Key text types: songs, dances, stories, paintings and visual design, video clips (IndigiTUBE)]

Create and present shared stories, songs and performances, using familiar words and patterns and support materials.

[Key concepts: story, performance; Key processes: retelling, singing, re-enacting, dancing, drawing, performing; Key text types: songs, dances, stories, paintings and visual design, performances]

#### Translating

Translate frequently used words and phrases, using visual cues and resources such as word lists.

[Key concepts: similarity, difference, meaning; Key processes: translating, noticing, identifying, explaining]

Create simple oral, print or multimodal bilingual texts for the classroom environment, such as captions, signs, labels and wall charts.

[Key concepts: meaning, bilingualism; Key processes: labelling, captioning, displaying, matching]

#### Identity

Describe aspects of self, such as family, school/class and language/s spoken, considering how these contribute to their sense of identity.

[Key concepts: identity, self, family, belonging; Key processes: describing, explaining, identifying]

#### Reflecting

Notice how using different languages involves some different ways of communicating and behaving.

[Key concepts: language, culture, similarity, difference, respect; Key processes: noticing, comparing, responding]

### Understanding

#### Systems of Language

Learn the different sounds of the language and link these to written symbols and conventions.

[Key concepts: pronunciation, intonation, writing; Key processes: imitating, noticing, distinguishing, reading aloud]

Recognise the function of different word types and understand basic elements of language structures.

[Key concepts: word function, word order, patterns, rules; Key processes: identifying, recognising, noticing]

Recognise there are many ways of communicating messages in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages.

[Key concepts: communication, narrative; Key processes: recognising, identifying]

Identify elements of the kinship system and its links to place and natural species.

[Key concepts: kinship and totemic relationships, place, ceremonial expression; Key processes: identifying, recognising]

#### Language variation and change

Recognise that different words and language forms are used to address and communicate with people according to relationship and context.

[Key concepts: kinship, context; Key processes: noticing, recognising]

Notice that languages borrow words from each other.

[Key concepts: relatedness, borrowing; Key processes: identifying, recognising, comparing]

#### Language Awareness

Recognise that the language is part of the broader regional and national language diversity.

[Key concepts: linguistic diversity, relationship; Key processes: identifying, recognising]

Understand that language belongs to communities, and that language learning requires the application of respectful and appropriate behaviour.

[Key concepts: ownership, custodianship, belonging, respect; Key processes: demonstrating, applying]

#### Role of language and culture

Notice that people use language in ways that reflect their culture, such as where and how they live and what is important to them.

[Key concepts: Country/Place, language, culture, symbol; Key processes: noticing, recognising, questioning, making connections]

#### Role of language building

Recognise that learning Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages can provide language revival benefits to communities.

[Key concept: language ownership, language revival; Key processes: identifying, engaging]

Build the resources of the language by creating, performing and recording new texts, and by creating new contexts for its use.

[Key concepts: language ownership, language revival; Key processes: noticing, building resources]