Queensland response to the draft F–10 Australian Curriculum: Languages

May 2013

Contents

1. Introduction

The Queensland Studies Authority (QSA), in partnership with Education Queensland (EQ), Queensland Catholic Education Commission (QCEC) and Independent Schools Queensland (ISQ), appreciates the opportunity to provide feedback on the draft *Foundation (F)[1] to Year 10 Australian Curriculum: Languages* (draft Languages curriculum). Queensland supports the development of an Australian Curriculum that will provide consistent and explicit curriculum expectations across the nation.

This response is a summary of the collated Queensland feedback from:

- representative curriculum and learning area committees of the QSA

- professional associations

- representatives and advocates of the three schooling sectors, representing 1400 EQ schools, 292 Catholic schools and 188 Independent schools.

Queensland's consultation identified a range of strengths, key issues and concerns, and also provided some suggested ways forward for the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting's (ACARA) consideration when redrafting the *F–10 Australian Curriculum: Languages*.

This response has been organised to reflect the structure of the consultation survey:

- Preamble, rationale and aims, and organisation

- Chinese — for each of the three pathways, feedback on the context statement, band descriptions, content descriptions, content elaborations and achievement standards is provided

- Italian — feedback on the context statement, band descriptions, content descriptions, content elaborations and achievement standards is provided.

The stakeholders who contributed to the Queensland response support the development of an Australian Curriculum in Languages and acknowledge that inherent in its development is the redefining and refocusing of the study of Languages in Australian schools.

In addition to contributing to the Queensland response, QCEC and ISQ have elected to submit their own responses to ACARA. These responses contain detailed feedback on each aspect of the draft curriculum.

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[1] The Foundation Year (F) of the Australian Curriculum is Prep (P) in Queensland and refers to the year before Year 1. Children beginning Prep in January are required to be five years of age by 30 June.

2.   Overall strengths and key issues

2.1   Overall strengths

- The overall structure and intent of the draft Languages curriculum are supported and consultation participants felt that the essential elements of the learning area have been elaborated.

- Overall, the draft Languages curriculum provides a framework through which to develop language proficiency and intercultural understanding.

- The draft rationale provides a justification for learning an additional language.

- The draft aims are thorough and encapsulate what all learners should be able to do as a result of studying a language.

- The relationship between learner background and the curriculum pathways is clearly stated.

- The context statements are, in general, clear and appropriate.

- The language specificity is acknowledged.

- Consultation participants strongly supported the structuring of the band descriptions over two years in order to enable students to affirm their learning from the previous year.

- The general capabilities are mostly well explained and exemplified.

- The described relationship between the Languages learning area and each of the cross-curriculum priorities is clear and appropriate.

2.2   Key issues

- Many consultation participants expressed concern about the clarity of what is included in the strands Communicating and Understanding. It is clear that Communicating includes knowledge and application of language skills. However, the intent of the Understanding strand is less clear.

- The content descriptions in the Understanding strand deal with the linguistic and cultural aspects of the language. This creates a tension between a functional language course, appropriate for languages education across F–12, and a tertiary approach that focuses on the constructs of language.

- What teachers are to teach and students are expected to learn is unclear. This is evident in the number of content descriptions that depend on the specificity of the content elaborations for understanding. This is a major issue as the content elaborations are not mandatory.

- The overemphasis on linguistics is not appropriate learning for F–10 students. Linguistic expertise should be developed as a component of using communicative language.

- The emphasis on identity issues as a component of intercultural understanding is too sensitive for F–10 and is not necessary in a Languages program.

- The sub-strand structure creates three key issues. The sub-strands:
  - are difficult to distinguish between because the strand structure is not an effective way to organise the learning in the curriculum
  - have a theoretical focus at the expense of comprehension of language and are unnecessarily difficult to understand. For example, in Language awareness, the use of "ecological relationships of language and culture over time" does little to explain what is required
  - are problematic as a second-level organiser of the curriculum as they:
    - are misnamed
    - overlap in purpose
    - do not have a clear purpose
    - are not relevant enough to stand alone
    - are too numerous.
- The band descriptions are crucial and need to be redrafted to make clear the relationship between the Communicating and Understanding strands. In redrafting the band descriptions, emphasise:
  - learning that allows the use of the communicative language
  - using information in the language to analyse, synthesise and justify when responding to others' texts, ideas, information and feelings
  - using language to respond to others by creating texts that express ideas, information and feelings in different contexts and for different purposes and audiences
  - understanding of systems of language and culture capability as a product of language learning rather than as a discrete goal
  - developing a curriculum that has as its starting point language acquisition in single contexts for particular audiences, progressing to broader, more varied and more complex opportunities for language use.
- The volume of content is excessive for the time on task, and the level of expectation across the two languages is uneven.
- In general, the Years 7–10 (Year 7 entry) sequence content descriptions are pitched too high for this entry point into the target language.
- The section dealing with the links to other learning areas needs to make clear the relationship between the Languages curriculum and the English curriculum. These two curriculums are complementary. The learning of language features in the Languages curriculum needs to occur concurrently with, or after, the same learning in English.
- The language of the document is impenetrable. It is too academic, uses jargon and is not accessible to its audience of F–10 teachers. The document needs to be rewritten using plain English as the jargon and tone prevents understanding of much of what is written. A plain English approach may resolve issues about pitch and allow for a better alignment of the content to the capacity and age of the students.
- The achievement standards are problematic, uneven and some overemphasise Understanding. They need to be redrafted in light of feedback. In addition, an achievement standard is required for each band.

3. Preamble, rationale and aims, and organisation

Overarching feedback collected during consultation on the preamble, rationale and aims, and organisation for the draft Languages curriculum is treated separately to the specific feedback for the subjects Chinese and Italian. This recognises that these sections will apply to all *Australian Curriculum: Languages* curriculums developed during Phase 3 of curriculum development.

Chinese- and Italian-specific examples will be provided in the following sections of this report.

3.1 Preamble

The preamble of the draft Languages curriculum*:*

- emphasises the interrelationships of language, culture and learning as the foundation for the learning area
- highlights the varied experiences that learners bring to the learning area
- provides a comprehensive description of each category of language learner
- focuses on the developing learners' bilingual or pluri-lingual capabilities.

While some consultation participants indicated support for the draft preamble and found it provided a clear overview, many, notably teachers, disagreed with this position and raised the following concerns and issues. The preamble does not:

- speak to its audience. The academic, aspirational tone and use of jargon is not appropriate to, and is not pitched at, the F–10 teacher–educator audience. It should be noted that, in many cases, the end user of the curriculum will be teachers who have English as their second language
- describe a curriculum for communicative language learning.

In addition, the subheading "Diversity of language learners", which outlines the varied experiences learners bring to the learning area, was confused with the section titled "Student diversity", which focuses on the diverse learning needs of all students.

> **Ways forward**
> - Rewrite the preamble using plain English to make its message more succinct and accessible to the target audience. Currently, the jargon and tone prevents understanding of much of what is written. Refer to Appendix 1 for suggested edits to the preamble.
> - Rename the subheading "Diversity of language learners" to "Different learner biographies"*.*

3.2 Rationale and aims

The rationale provides a justification for learning an additional language. The aims are thorough and encapsulate what all learners should be able to do as a result of studying a language.

Feedback from consultation participants highlighted the following concerns.

- The rationale is long-winded and repetitive — the key messages will be lost unless the reader is committed to reading the entire section.
- The first three dot points of the rationale repeat the Languages learning area aims and do not justify the inclusion of Languages in the curriculum offerings at a school.

- The higher order thinking opportunities afforded by the Languages learning area are not given adequate emphasis.

> **Ways forward**
> - Revise the rationale by:
>   – deleting the first three dot points
>   – reordering the paragraphs to ensure that key messages are clear and obvious
>   – reordering content and removing repetition in the other dot points to ensure the promotion of higher order thinking.
>
> Refer to Appendix 2 for suggested edits to the rationale.

3.3 Organisation

Curriculum architecture

The relationship between learner background and the curriculum pathways is clearly stated. Across Queensland schools, the teaching of languages can begin at different entry points according to how the school has allocated time for language learning and/or the availability of a language teacher.

During consultation, participants raised concerns about the Time on task (indicative hours) section as some students may be entering language classes outside of the entry points for Level 1 identified in the draft Languages curriculum.

Different entry points need to be considered when examining the relationship between the curriculum content and achievement standards. For example, if students begin learning a language in Year 5:

- How much time do they need to achieve Levels 1 and 2 by the end of Year 6?
- Is it assumed that students will have spent 175 hours in Level 1 before beginning Level 2?
- Would students entering language learning at Year 5 need twice as much time as those students who started at Foundation?

Content structure

Strands

While some consultation participants indicated support for the two strands Communicating and Understanding, not all felt that the strands were clearly defined. The following issues and concerns were noted.

- It is clear that Communicating includes knowledge and application of language skills. However, the intent of the Understanding strand is less clear.
- The two strands currently organise the curriculum into:
  – the study of the functional use of language as a communication tool
  – the study of language, i.e. the study of the linguistic and cultural aspects of language.

  This differentiation confuses the purpose of the curriculum and creates the potential for courses that are not like any current school-based language programs. While it is not the business of ACARA to implement curriculum, it is important to deliver a curriculum that can be implemented. Language teachers have not had the pedagogical preparation to deliver this curriculum as it is currently organised and defined.

- The emphasis on linguistics is too great and is inappropriate learning for F–10 students. Linguistic expertise should be developed as part of language learning. However, it should be developed as a component of using communicative language, involving a range of cognitive processes, and not as a discrete purpose and intended product. In this regard, the draft Languages curriculum does not achieve its stated purpose that the strands should not be taught in isolation.

> **Ways forward**
> - Define Understanding in terms of the linguistic and cultural understanding that students will demonstrate when they create Chinese or Italian texts and when they reason about, and respond to, others' Chinese or Italian texts.
> - Describe Communicating and Understanding in the context of active language use that realistically reflects the intellectual and linguistic capacity of the learners in terms of age and pathway.
> - Ensure that the complementary relationship between Communicating and Understanding is evident in terms of description and purpose, and ensure that the differences between the two are easily observable and readily understood.
> - Clarify when the target language is used and when English is used as the language of the student response.

Sub-strands

While some consultation participants indicated that the sub-strands structure provided sufficient guidance, many raised the following range of issues and concerns.

- The sub-strand structure creates three key issues. The sub-strands:
    - are difficult to distinguish between because the strand structure is not an effective way to organise the learning in the curriculum
    - have a theoretical focus at the expense of comprehension of language and are unnecessarily difficult to understand. For example, in Language awareness, the use of "ecological relationships of language and culture over time" does little to explain what is required
    - are problematic as a second-level organiser of the curriculum as they:
        - are misnamed
        - overlap in purpose
        - do not have a clear purpose
        - are not relevant enough to stand alone
        - are too numerous.
- The rationale and the sub-strands do not align. Although the rationale indicates that the learning area provides opportunities for higher order thinking, cognitive words that reflect this in the sub-strand descriptions are lacking.
- The modes of student responses to, and engagement with, the texts — in terms of whether students read, listen or view, or write or speak — are not clearly represented in the sub-strands.

Context statement, band descriptions, content descriptions, content elaborations and achievement standards

- The context statement is clear and appropriate. It acknowledges that learning a language in Australia will be different to learning a language in another context.

- The band descriptions, content descriptions and achievement standards are not aligned. The relationships between the beginning, middle and end of the document should be obvious and clear.

- Realistic band descriptions would better describe the capabilities of students at each band level. If content and achievement are to be appropriately described, the bands must be age, pathway, content and concept appropriate.

- The content descriptions:
    - are too broad to describe a useful continuum of learning, both within and across the bands. A useful continuum of learning would support teacher planning and consistent provision across schools
    - need to stand alone as repositories of meaning and not rely on the elaborations for understanding
    - need to be contextualised to a language application rather than be described conceptually.

- The achievement standards:
    - are uneven, not applicable to a communicative context and, in some instances, overemphasise Understanding
    - are a summary of content rather than showing progression of learning and quality of performance
    - are too detailed, contain too much information and are not achievable in the time indicated
    - lack reference to higher order thinking cognitions
    - include both the content descriptions and the non-mandatory content elaborations.

In addition, an achievement standard is required for each band.

Ways forward

- Gather student work and use it to describe what students can know and do as a starting point for describing the curriculum.
- Revise the band descriptions to provide teachers with a clear understanding of the relationship between the strands Communicating and Understanding. This relationship should be complementary and reflect a Languages curriculum as opposed to a Linguistics curriculum. It should emphasise:
  – learning that allows the use of the communicative language
  – using information in the language to analyse, synthesise and justify when responding to others' texts, ideas, information and feelings
  – using language to respond to others by creating texts that express ideas, information and feelings in different contexts and for different purposes and audiences
  – understanding of systems of language and culture capability as a product of language learning rather than as a discrete goal
  – developing a curriculum that has as its starting point language acquisition in single contexts for particular audiences, progressing to opportunities for learners to respond in different contexts, for different audiences and for different purposes.
- Revise the content descriptions to make clear what teachers need to teach and what students need to learn without the need to rely on the non-mandated content elaborations.
- Revise the achievement standards to:
  – show the development of students' understandings and capacity with language skill development
  – remove references to the non-mandatory content elaborations.
- Provide an achievement standard for each band.

Student diversity

Consultation participants agree that all students should have access to learning a language and that the interests of students should be considered when planning for language learning.

Feedback from consultation participants highlighted the following concerns.

- In the Phase 1 learning areas — English, Mathematics, Science and History — the Student diversity section uses the heading "Diversity of learners". For consistency, sections that are common to all learning areas should use the same headings.

- The Gifted and talented students section should be written in the context of language learning.

Ways forward

- Use the heading "Diversity of learners" for the section currently titled "Student diversity".
- Use the text for Diversity of learners, as used in the Phase 1 curriculum documents, but refine it to be Languages specific.
- Revise the Gifted and talented students section. Consider the following suggested edits:

  "Giftedness in a student is commonly characterised by a rapid pace of learning, advanced quality of thinking and exceptional memory skills, with the capacity for remarkably high standards of performance compared with other students of the same age.

  Among the characteristics of gifted children relevant to language learning are:
  – rapid pace of learning, with less practice and repetition needed
  – excellent retention of knowledge (excellent memory)
  – ability to see relationships in ideas and facts
  – fluent and flexible thinking."

General capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities

Feedback from consultation participants generally indicates that the general capabilities are well explained and exemplified and that the described relationship between the Languages learning area and each of the cross-curriculum priorities is clear and appropriate. However, participants in the consultation on the draft Italian language curriculum felt that the relationship between Italian and each of the general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities is not evident in the curriculum content.

Feedback highlighted the following concerns.

- Literacy:
    - The inclusion of examples that are specific to the Language learning area would be beneficial.
    - The use of the word "strangeness" in the sentence "The strangeness of the additional language requires scaffolding" has negative connotations.

- Information and communication technology (ICT) capability:
    - The benefits of using digital devices in Languages teaching and learning programs should be highlighted.
    - The terms "synchronous" and "asynchronous" are not readily understood by teachers.
    - The description needs to be broadened beyond just using and accessing multimodal resources, digital environments and technologies.

- Critical and creative thinking:
    - Additional higher order thinking verbs should be included.

- Intercultural understanding:
    - The intent of this capability is clearly expressed in the *Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Languages* and the relevant text should be repeated here.

Ways forward
Literacy
- Replace the word "strangeness" with "unfamiliarity" in the sentence "The strangeness of the additional language requires scaffolding".

Information and communication technology capability
- Revise the section using the following suggested edit:
  "Learning languages is enhanced through the use of target language, multimodal resources, digital environments and technologies that provide for both teacher-directed and student learning experiences. Accessing live target language environments and texts via digital media contributes to the development of information technology capabilities as well as linguistic and intercultural capability. Using digital devices in Languages programmes enables both individualised learning and collaborative projects, and accessing diverse real-time contexts both extends the boundaries of the classroom and resonates with students."
- Include a statement outlining an expectation that students use ICTs in meaningful and purposeful ways to inquire, create and communicate in the target language.

Critical and creative thinking

- Revise the section using the following suggested edit:

  "Well-designed, meaningful and purposeful language learning tasks foster critical and creative thinking, and encourage divergent and imaginative thinking. In learning a language, particularly through a concept-based curriculum, students broaden their thinking as they learn to interact with people from diverse backgrounds in addressing issues and as they explore and reflect critically. Seeing things from different perspectives helps them to become divergent thinkers. By learning to notice, connect, compare, and analyse aspects of the target language, and to synthesise understandings, students develop critical-thinking skills and analytic and problem-solving skills which enable them to arrive at decisions, design action plans and so on."

Intercultural understanding

- Revise the first paragraph in the section using the following suggested edit:

  "The development of intercultural understanding is both a central aim and a desirable result of learning languages. Communication in the target language is enhanced through well-considered learning sequences that use authentic materials and genuine, purposeful interactions. The development of intercultural capability is central to meaningful, productive global citizenship and is a lifelong endeavour. Students come to the language learning process with various preconceptions, assumptions, and orientations that are shaped by their existing language(s) and culture(s). Learning a language challenges these existing positions. For all students, learning a language (whether as a second language or as the students' home or heritage language) involves working with, and moving between, at least two languages and cultures: the new and the existing. This movement between languages and cultures is integral to language learning and use; it is what makes the experience intercultural."

Cross curriculum priorities

- Move the following paragraph from the Sustainability section to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures section:

  "Learning Aboriginal languages and Torres Strait Islander languages contributes to the global effort to exchange knowledge among people with varied practices in caring for the land. It also contributes to the reconciliation process in Australia and goals for language revival."

Links to other learning areas

This section is important for Languages teachers to support their efforts in ensuring that the Languages learning area is integrated and interrelated to other school curriculum offerings. The examples provided, while narrow, are appropriate.

Feedback from consultation participants highlighted the following concerns.

- The section is not succinct. The layout of the Links to other learning areas section in the Phase 1 F–10 Australian Curriculum learning areas is preferred as it is clear and uncluttered.

- None of the provided examples link to the Phase 1 F–10 Australian Curriculum learning areas.

- The links to the English learning area need to be emphasised.

Ways forward
- Use the same format used in the Phase 1 F–10 Australian Curriculum learning areas.
- Provide links to the Phase 1 F–10 Australian Curriculum learning areas, especially the English learning area.

4. Chinese

The Queensland Languages curriculum is not differentiated in terms of pathways. Therefore, limited feedback was received during consultation for the Chinese First language learner and Background language learner pathways. In general, the feedback for these pathways reflects the feedback collected about the draft curriculum for the Chinese Second language learner pathway.

4.1 Context statement

The context statement clearly describes the place of Chinese language in Australian education and, more broadly, in contemporary Australia.

The section on the diversity of learners of Chinese articulates how learners will be able to attain different levels of language proficiency dependant on their backgrounds.

Consultation participants identified the following concerns about the context statement.

- The text is overly descriptive, and clarity is lost in the lengthy sentences and explanations.

- Participants disagreed with the statement that Modern Standard Chinese is spoken by a "majority" of Chinese speakers.

- The place of Chinese culture and language in Australian education section includes unnecessary information and omits key elements.

- The nature of Chinese language learning section is not clear and needs to be defined.

- The diversity of learners of Chinese section needs further clarification. For example, the inclusion of a brief explanation beside each pathway — e.g. "First language learner pathway (students with Chinese language education)" — and specific guidance for administrators, teachers and parents to distinguish whether a student should be undertaking the background or first language learner pathway is needed.

- The description for the Background language learner pathway is different to the explanation in the Languages preamble.

- The context statement states that the Chinese language referred to in the curriculum is Modern Standard Chinese and that simplified characters are used. Without clarification, traditional characters could be used for comprehension activities, especially in classes with high numbers of students from Taiwan or Hong Kong.

Ways forward

- Revise the context statement to make it more succinct.
- Revise The place of the Chinese culture and language in Australian education section to:
  – omit the discussion of previous methods of teaching Chinese, as it is unnecessary and does not add value to the context statement
  – include a statement that provides more relevant and contemporary information including that:
    ▪ Australia is part of Asia and knowledge of Modern Standard Chinese facilitates entry into the Asia-Pacific region, in areas such as business, trade, tourism and education, and, when combined with other skills, may increase employment opportunities within Australia and internationally
    ▪ China is a major trading partner of Australia
    ▪ Australia is a popular destination for Chinese-speaking students and tourists.
- Change the word "glossing" in the statement "glossing of characters", as it is unclear. Alternatively, add a definition to the glossary which clarifies the intended meaning.
- Include a brief and clear explanation beside each pathway so they are readily understood, e.g. "First language learner pathway (students with Chinese education)".
- Align the descriptions of the Background language learner pathway in the preamble and in the Chinese context statement.
- Identify when and where it is appropriate for traditional characters to be used in teaching and assessment.

4.2 Band descriptions

General feedback

One of the purposes of the band descriptions is to "provide a general description of language learning that is typical of particular phases along the F–10 continuum." Consultation participants felt that the current band descriptions do not meet this purpose for the following reasons.

- In general, the expectations outlined in the band descriptions are too ambitious or inappropriate for targeted learners.

- The expectations framed in the band descriptions should align to the content descriptions, which does not occur in the draft Chinese curriculum. Realistic band descriptions will better inform age and student capabilities at each band level. If content and achievement are to be appropriately described, the bands must be age, pathway, content and concept appropriate.

- The band descriptions need to outline the specifics of how courses are implemented and the extent to which learning enhances identity.

- Limited reference is made to the importance of developing dictionary skills.

- The differences between handwriting and writing digitally need to be distinguished.

- The curriculum focuses on Modern Standard Chinese or *Putonghua*. Learners need to be aware that other dialects and languages exist.

Chinese — Second language learner pathway

Foundation to Year 10 sequence-specific feedback

Feedback indicated that the pitch of the Foundation to Year 2 (Level 1) band description is appropriate. However, some consultation participants indicated that this is not the case with the later band descriptions. Illustrative examples include:

- Years 3 and 4 (Level 1):
    - The band description states "Students engage primarily with the oral language." This does not align to content description 2.2 "Write short pieces of correspondence, such as cards, text messages and notes to share personal information and ideas".
    - The band description states: "Printed texts used to assist in reading aloud or singing are primarily presented in Pinyin, though these may be glossed with characters." This expectation is too low. It is suggested that the text is refined to "Printed texts used to assist in reading aloud or singing are presented in characters, with Pinyin support".

- Years 7 and 8 (Level 3):
    - The complexity of the target language is too great to expect learners at this level to read authentic texts unless the texts have been modified.
    - Participation in online forums, and creating and responding to messages from other Chinese speakers, is too ambitious for this age group.
    - Online environments must be heavily controlled and selected by the teacher.

- Years 9 and 10 (Level 4):
    - At this level, the language ability of learners may not be sophisticated enough to:
        - compose short "biographies and opinion pieces on issues of public interest" in the target language
        - use "creative and expressive language … relating to contemporary issues" as well as "express some complex concepts and reactions" in the target language.

Years 7 to 10 (Year 7 entry) sequence-specific feedback

Many consultation participants felt that the band descriptions are pitched too high for this entry point into the target language. Illustrative examples include:

- Years 7 and 8 (Level 1):
    - At this level, the language ability of learners is not sophisticated enough for them to:
        - read correspondence, advertisements and publicity brochures in the target language
        - write letters, recounts and narratives in the target language.

- Years 9 and 10 (Level 2):
    - At this level, the language ability of learners is not sophisticated enough for them to:
        - read online texts, unless the texts have been modified
        - participate in online chat forums — online environments must be heavily controlled and selected by the teacher
        - compose opinion pieces on issues of public interest in the target language.

Chinese — First language learner pathway

Years 7 to 10 (Year 7 entry) sequence-specific feedback

Consultation identified the following strengths for the Years 7 to 10 (Year 7 entry) Chinese First language learner pathway band descriptions.

- Student recognition of "their place and identity as members of a vibrant Chinese-speaking community in Australia and the potential role they may play in their global and local futures".

- The emphasis on a range of cognitions, including:

  - persuading "others to support a position or view, justifying their perspectives by drawing on ideas or experiences of others"

  - engaging "with Chinese literature, drawing on contemporary literature in order to enhance their appreciation of literary styles"

  - writing "in more expressive and creative ways"

  - learning "how to write objectively and substantiate their ideas and perspectives in appropriate ways".

However, the band descriptions are not always age appropriate and are pitched too high for this entry point into the target language. Illustrative examples include:

- The emphasis on "difference" can be contrasted with the development of "bilingual and bicultural identities". The latter approach positively addresses the inclusion of the individual in the world in which they live. It is crucial that the balance between the curriculum and the maturity and interests of the learner be addressed. "Students develop a personal position, make reasoned judgments and provide balanced interpretations" is an example of a balanced and positive description of what students may be able to do.

- Years 7 and 8 (Level 1):

  - The use of the term "friction" has a negative connotation in the statement "They explore how their identities are changing through their lived experience in Australia, identifying points of friction between their values and those around them (in both Australia and China), and how to respond to these." The wording could be edited to read "They explore how their identities are changing through their lived experience in Australia, identifying points of difference between their values and those around them (in both Australia and China), and how they respond to these."

  - "Being Chinese" is overemphasised and limits the opportunities to engage in meaningful learning that is accessible through Chinese texts that are not related to cultural differences.

  - Exploring "how their identities are changing through their lived experience in Australia" may be emotionally and personally challenging for young people who are still defining who they are and how they fit into the world around them.

- Years 9 and 10 (Level 2):

  - At this entry point, "exploring their emotions … and recognising and accepting diversity in the perspectives of others" is beyond teaching and learning that develops knowledge and skills. It is instead an affective objective that may not be realistic or achievable.

  - "Developing their 'Chinese voice' effectively for diverse audiences" is not clear in terms of meaning and not possible in terms of scope.

Chinese — Background language learner pathway

Years 7 to 10 (Year 7 entry) sequence-specific feedback

The band descriptions appropriately describe the learning for students in this pathway at this entry point, particularly in Years 7 and 8 (Level 1). However, in Years 9 and 10 (Level 2), consultation participants identified the following concerns.

- The band description emphasises engagement with "bilingual versions of classic and contemporary literature, connecting to film and TV versions to enhance understanding". During consultation, teachers identified a limited capacity to teach this specific area of content and queried whether this emphasis is necessary or relevant to learners.

- The specificity of the band description is questioned with regard to:
  - "increased engagement with members of their local communities, in particular with older generations by visiting aged community care and other welfare facilities"
  - "establishing a more stable identity where they are interculturally and intraculturally aware, viewing their bilingualism as an asset for themselves and for Australia".

> **Ways forward**
> **For all pathways and entry points**
> - Revise the band descriptions to make them more reader friendly, e.g. use headings and dot points.
> - Revise the band descriptions to provide teachers with a clear understanding of the relationship between the strands Communicating and Understanding. This relationship should be complementary and reflect a Languages curriculum as opposed to a Linguistics curriculum. It should emphasise:
>   - learning that allows the use of the communicative language
>   - using information in the language to analyse, synthesise and justify when responding to others' texts, ideas, information and feelings
>   - using language to respond to others by creating texts that express ideas, information and feelings in different contexts and for different purposes and audiences
>   - understanding of systems of language and culture capability as a product of language learning rather than as a discrete goal
>   - developing a curriculum that has as its starting point language acquisition in single contexts for particular audiences, progressing to broader, more varied and more complex opportunities for language use.
> - Ensure the descriptions about language learning in the band descriptions are age appropriate and aligned to the content descriptions.
> - Clarify the use of technologies and dictionaries and, distinguish between handwriting and writing digitally.
> - Clarify that the curriculum focus is Modern Standard Chinese, but that learners need to be aware that other dialects and languages exist.

4.3 Content descriptions and content elaborations

General feedback

The purpose of the content descriptions is to "describe the knowledge, understanding, skills and processes that teachers are expected to teach, and students are expected to learn". The content elaborations are not mandatory and "are intended as support material only". With this in mind:

- many of the content descriptions across all bands depend on the content elaborations for meaning

- the amount of content to be covered, in relation to its breadth and the time on task, is not achievable. The content is not always relevant to the age and interests of students

- the amount of content and the clarity of the content expectations across Chinese and Italian is uneven. For example, the Chinese language curriculum:

  – has more content descriptions for teachers to cover than the Italian language curriculum (particularly in Level 4)

  – is not written as clearly as the Italian language curriculum, which provides greater clarity about what teachers are expected to teach

- the draft content descriptions lack linguistic content and contain no references to grammar, cohesive language features or linguistic elements (such as phonology, morphology and syntax), which teachers are expected to teach, and students are expected to learn

- successful teaching of grammar and cohesive language features in the target language is dependent upon the learner understanding and successfully using these in English. The Languages and English curriculums should be complementary. The learning of language features in the Languages curriculum needs to occur concurrently with, or after, the same learning in English

- the majority of consultation participants indicated that the focus of the content is biased towards intercultural understanding, which is only one of the three aims set out for the curriculum. This bias comes at the cost of communicating in the target language

- the inclusion of examples linked to the content elaborations is supported. However, not all content elaborations are supported with examples

- the content elaborations are not mandatory. A mandatory character list for both recognition and/or reproduction for each band would provide guidance about the minimum expectation for teaching and learning programs

- the addition of key concepts, key processes and key text types clarifies the content descriptions in the Years 7 to 10 (Year 7 entry) sequence. Consultation participants received this inclusion favourably and it should be used in the Foundation to Year 10 sequence.

Chinese — Second language learner pathway

Foundation to Year 10 sequence-specific feedback

The majority of consultation participants indicated that the pitch of the content descriptions and the content elaborations is often unrealistic. Illustrative examples of content descriptions that are pitched too high include:

- Foundation to Year 2 (Level 1):

  – Content description 1.5 — Retain the focus on the child, as learners at this age prefer to talk about themselves and their likes and dislikes.

  – Content description 1.10 — At this age, word order should not be a specific outcome. This is more suited to Years 3 and 4 when students are better equipped to understand and work with grammatical patterns.

Illustrative examples of content descriptions with content elaborations that are pitched too high include:

- Years 5 and 6 (Level 2)

  – Content descriptions 3.2, 3.3, 3.11 and 3.20.

Years 7 to 10 (Year 7 entry) sequence-specific feedback

The pitch of the content descriptions and the content elaborations is often unrealistic and, in some cases, is not culturally correct. In particular, consultation participants were concerned that the content descriptions for Years 7 and 8 (Level 1) are pitched inappropriately for the entry point into the target language. Illustrative examples of content descriptions that are pitched too high and are too ambitious for the level include:

- Years 7 and 8 (Level 1):
    - Content description 1.4: "express opinions".
    - Content description 1.12: "humour and entertainment in diverse media".
    - Content description 1.23: "Understand the role of syllable-morphemes in the construction of words and how individual morphemes apply in new words encountered."
- Years 9 and 10 (Level 2):
    - Content description 2.9: "Write informative texts to express a personal view about life experience in diverse communities."
    - Content description 2.11: "Respond personally to forms of expression in contemporary media."

Illustrative examples of content descriptions that are unclear in their meaning include:

- Years 7 and 8 (Level 1):
    - Content description 1.23: "Understand the role of syllable-morphemes in the construction of words and how individual morphemes apply in new words encountered."
- Years 9 and 10 (Level 2):
    - Content description 2.6: "Identify perspectives and explore ways in which values shape interpretations."

Illustrative examples of content descriptions with content elaborations that are pitched too high include:

- Years 7 and 8 (Level 1):
    - Content descriptions 1.1, 1.2, 1.4, 1.5, 1.8, 1.14, 1.21 and 1.26.
- Years 9 and 10 (Level 2):
    - Content descriptions 2.1, 2.4, 2.12, 2.13, 2.19, 2.23, 2.24, 2.25 and 2.32.

The content elaborations with the characters that are of concern highlighted can be forwarded to ACARA if required.

Chinese — First language learner pathway

Years 7 to 10 (Year 7 entry) sequence-specific feedback

The majority of feedback indicated that the purpose of the content descriptions is often unclear and the pitch unrealistic. The requirements for students in terms of interest, maturity and capacity are unrealistic.

Examples of content descriptions that illustrate a range of concerns raised during consultation include:

- Years 7 and 8 (Level 1):
  - Content description 1.1: "Recognise the cultural assumptions and social expectations of others when interacting in the Australian context" is dependent on the elaborations for meaning.
  - Content description 1.4: "Seek out sources of information to strengthen understanding of their own experiences" is not realistic or age appropriate.
  - Content description 1.5: "Recognise the origins and motivations of sources in judging the relevance and credibility of information" is not an objective that is useful in the learning of languages, and is more relevant to the Humanities.
  - Content description 1.6: "Develop and apply knowledge to enhance their educational and social experience" is an affective objective and "enhancing experience" is not relevant to language learning.
  - Content description 1.7: "Engage with the world of popular culture and express a personal view on how the notion of 'being Chinese' is represented or perceived" is not age appropriate.
  - Content description 1.8: "Explore examples of classical literature" is not age appropriate and language teachers are not trained to teach classical literature.
  - Content description 1.16: "Develop the metalanguage to discuss features of Chinese phonology" places the study of language into the field of linguistics. It does not represent what is demonstrated when students create and respond to texts.
  - Content description 1.17: "Apply their systemic knowledge of orthography to enhance their own reading and writing practices" is dependent on the elaborations for meaning. In addition, it does not represent what is demonstrated when students create and respond to texts.
- Years 9 and 10 (Level 2):
  - Content description 2.1: "Interact with sensitivity to linguistic and cultural diversity in their community" is not age appropriate or achievable.
  - Content description 2.3: "Engage with their local community and make a contribution as Chinese-Australians" is dependent on the elaborations for meaning.
  - Content description 2.4: "Research and monitor information relating to topical issues in the Sinophone world" is not age appropriate.
  - Content description 2.7: "Explore cultural dynamism and cross-cultural influences in contemporary media" needs to be contextualised to be age appropriate and clear.
  - Content description 2.9: "Experiment with diverse genres and associated stylistic devices to express own ideas with imagination and creativity" is too difficult for a student at this band. Students may use different genres and some may use a range of genres. Imagination and creativity is unlikely from most students and many will mechanically demonstrate some use of different genres.

- Content description 2.10: "Participate in mediating the thoughts and ideas of others in interactions between people of diverse language backgrounds" is unattainable for students and will not be able to be taught or measured by teachers.

- Content description 2.21: "Analyse and apply features of literary styles evident in classical literature" would not appeal to or benefit most students as it would be too difficult. Furthermore, language teachers are not trained to teach classical literature.

Illustrative examples of content elaborations that are pitched too high or are not age appropriate include:

- Years 7 and 8 (Level 1):
  - Content descriptions 1.1 and 1.5.

- Years 9 and 10 (Level 2):
  - Content descriptions 2.15, 2.17 and 2.22.

Teachers expressed concern about how the First language learner pathway will be perceived. Some felt that there was an inference that the pathway was designed to assist first language learners in dealing with the broader curriculum. This is illustrated through the elaborations associated with content description 1.12:

- "translating terminology from other learning areas across languages, for example science, mathematics and social science concepts and terms"

- "comparing differences in focus in subject content across the curriculum, for example comparing the subject matter in courses related to civics education across cultures and societies (such as 政治 in China)".

Chinese — Background language learner pathway

Years 7 to 10 (Year 7 entry) sequence-specific feedback

In general, the pitch of the content descriptions and the content elaborations is appropriate, but needs to be more simple and clear. In some examples, minor changes to descriptions would allow for better alignment to the capacity of students at this age and phase of learning.

Most of the content elaborations are clear and inform understanding of the content descriptions. However, some content elaborations need to be rewritten using plain English in order to be understood and some are not pitched appropriately. Illustrative examples include:

- Years 9 and 10 (Level 2):
  - Content description 2.1: "Maintain a principled position" elevates the objective beyond communicative language use. That the position is "principled" is not significant, age appropriate or measurable.

  - Content description 2.14: "Interpret the assumptions and positioning of others in interaction and respond in a manner appropriate to expectations" is dependent on the elaborations for meaning. The inclusion of a language context would resolve this issue.

  - Content description 2.16: "Apply knowledge of the principles of character form and function when reading or producing texts, examining component form and function to associate sound and meaning with new characters encountered in texts" needs to be written in plain English. This also applies to content descriptions 2.17, 2.23 and 2.24.

- In general, the term "different" should be used in preference to "multiple" or "diverse" to cater for the capacity of the students. Examples include:

- Content description 2.6: "Share insights and acknowledge multiple perspectives" should be "different perspectives".

- Content description 2.8: "Express a personal perspective on the experiences of individuals or groups represented in diverse forms of contemporary media and traditional literature" should be "different forms".

- Content descriptions that focus on classical literature are not age appropriate. Language teachers are not trained to teach classical literature.

- Content elaborations that refer to using traditional characters are in conflict with the context statement.

Ways forward

For all pathways and entry points

- Revise the content descriptions to make clear what teachers are expected to teach and what students are expected to learn without the need to rely on the non-mandatory content elaborations.

- Decrease the number of content descriptions and revise them to sharpen their focus on all three aims that have been outlined for the curriculum.

- Revise the content elaborations to ensure that their pitch is appropriate for the band.

- Provide a mandatory character list that must be taught for recognition and/or reproduction for each band.

- Provide linguistic references to the grammar, cohesive language features or linguistic elements (such as phonology, morphology and syntax) that teachers are expected to teach, and students are expected to learn.

- Undertake a scan of the Chinese curriculum against the *Australian Curriculum: English* to ensure the teaching of grammar and cohesive devices in the target language occurs concurrently with, or after, they have been taught in English.

- Provide examples for all content elaborations.

For Foundation to Year 10 sequence

- Support teachers in using the content descriptions by identifying the:

  - key concepts

  - key processes

  - key text types.

4.4   Achievement standards

Consultation participants identified the following general concerns about the achievement standards.

- The achievement standards are a summary of content rather than a progression of learning and quality of performance.

- Some achievement standards are too detailed, contain too much information and are not achievable in the time indicated.

- The achievement standards align to both the content descriptions and the non-mandatory content elaborations.

- The achievement standards lack reference to higher order thinking cognitions.

- A single achievement standard represents the standard of learning for two bands: the Foundation to Year 2 band and the Years 3 and 4 band.

- The Years 9 and 10 Background language learner pathway achievement standard makes reference to traditional characters, which is in conflict with the context statement.

4.5 Glossary

Limited feedback on the glossary was received during consultation. Consultation participants raised concerns about:

- the definition for "reciprocal exchange", which needs to be clearer and simpler. Some suggestions for refinement include that "reciprocal exchange":
    - occurs in cross-cultural communication
    - requires people to be active, not passive, participants in an exchange
    - includes key elements such as noticing, comparing similarities and differences, reflection on self, reflection on others, and analysis and reflection of communicative choices
    - includes successful communication with others that is not only determined by what they do, but is also affected by what members of the other different languages and culture understand them to do
    - may require a participant to adjust language (verbal or non-verbal).

- the definition for "literacy", which needs to include current thinking about literacy as social practice occurring within a particular context

- the following terms, which are used in the draft *F–10 Australian Curriculum: Chinese — Background language learning pathway* and need to be defined in the glossary
    - "prosody"
    - "sandhi".

5. Italian

5.1 Context statement

The context statement clearly describes the place of Italian language in contemporary Australia and in Australian education. The nature of learning Italian and the diversity of learners of Italian in the current Australian context has been clearly outlined in the context statement.

Consultation participants identified the following concerns about the context statement.

- The place of the Italian language in Australian education section:
  - includes a discussion of previous methods of teaching Italian, which is considered to be unnecessary and not to add value to the context statement
  - includes the statement " … little attention paid to actual communication or contemporary culture …", which is considered to be misleading and to imply that language teachers do not focus on the development of students' communication skills
  - omits reference to the historical significance of Italian in Australia.
- The diversity of learners of Italian section:
  - Paragraph one: The diversity of Italian learners is not clearly understood in the current format. Using dot points would assist with the clarity of message.
  - The meaning of the phrase "related variety" is unclear and should be replaced by "another".

> **Ways forward**
> - Revise the context statement by:
>   - removing reference to previous methods of teaching Italian
>   - removing statements with negative connotations
>   - including the historical significance of Italian in Australia. For example:
>   "The history of Italian settlement in Australia can be traced to the First Fleet in 1788 and the place of Italian-speaking communities in Australia continues to play a significant role in Australia's culturally-diverse society."
>   - using dot points as a formatting style to support clarity of message
>   - replacing "related variety" with "another".

5.2 Band descriptions

One of the purposes of the band descriptions is to "provide a general description of language learning that is typical of particular phases along the F–10 continuum." Consultation participants felt that the current band descriptions do not meet this purpose for the following reasons.

- For many of the bands, the band descriptors provide a clear overview but, in some instances, the expectations are too ambitious or inappropriate for targeted learners.

- The expectations in the band descriptions should align to the content descriptions, which does not occur in the draft Languages curriculum. Realistic band descriptions will better inform age and student capabilities at each band level. If content and achievement are to be appropriately described, the bands must be age, pathway, content and concept appropriate.

Foundation to Year 10 sequence-specific feedback

In some instances, the band descriptions are verbose and unclear or the pitch is not appropriate for the level. Illustrative examples include:

- Foundation to Year 2 (Level 1):
  - It would assist teachers if "the important role of culture in shaping language use" was supported with age-appropriate examples and emphasised that learning at this band is structured.
  - Consultation participants were concerned whether students will have enough proficiency in the target language to participate in play and imaginative activities. It would be more appropriate for students to be involved in class activities and group responses, using simple structures and vocabulary, active listening and action-related talk.

- Years 5 and 6 (Level 2):
  - Consultation participants were concerned whether "maintaining blogs and web pages and participating in social networks" is appropriate at this age level. The online environments would need to be controlled and selected by the teacher.
  - At this level, students' language development in the target language will not allow them to engage in debates and discussions in Italian.
  - It is hoped that all students enjoy learning a second language. However, an aspirational statement such as "they are aware that they are becoming users of more than one code and enjoy it" should be avoided in a curriculum document. The wording could be changed to "they are aware that they are becoming users of more than one code".

- Years 7 and 8 (Level 3):
  - At this level, students still require structured and modelled frameworks for their learning with some opportunity to begin to experiment, rather than "exploring".

- In Years 9 and 10 (Level 4):
  - For many students, the only Italian speakers they will encounter are at school because of the lack of a local Italian community. Hence, for the majority of schools and local communities, it will not be possible for students to "interact with … Italian speakers in immediate and local contexts … "
  - It would assist teachers if age-appropriate examples were provided to illustrate ways in which "Learners' intercultural capability is strengthened by using more substantive ways to investigate the links between the target language and cultural representation and expression. The reflective and reciprocal dimension of Italian language learning strengthens intellectual and personal flexibility".

Years 7 to 10 (Year 7 entry) sequence-specific feedback

In some instances, the band descriptions are verbose and unclear or the pitch is not appropriate for the level. Illustrative examples include:

- Year 7 and 8 (Level 1):
  - Much of the band description reads as if students have been learning Italian for some time. At this entry point, it must be assumed that students are engaging with the target language for the first time. Examples include:
    - "Opportunities to review and consolidate prior learning against provision of … "
    - "Italian is used in more extended and elaborated ways … "
    - "They use vocabulary and grammar with increasing accuracy … "

– At this level, the language ability of learners is not sophisticated enough for them to draft and edit "texts to improve structure and to clarify meaning".

> **Ways forward**
> - Revise the band descriptions to make them more reader friendly, e.g. use headings and dot points.
> - Revise the band descriptions to provide teachers with a clear understanding of the relationship between the strands Communicating and Understanding. This relationship should be complementary and reflect a Languages curriculum as opposed to a Linguistics curriculum. It should emphasise:
>   – learning that allows the use of the communicative language
>   – using information in the language to analyse, synthesise and justify when responding to others' texts, ideas, information and feelings
>   – using language to respond to others by creating texts that express ideas, information and feelings in different contexts and for different purposes and audiences
>   – understanding of systems of language and culture capability as a product of language learning rather than as a discrete goal
>   – developing a curriculum that has as its starting point language acquisition in single contexts for particular audiences, progressing to broader, more varied and more complex opportunities for language use.
> - Ensure the descriptions about language learning in the band descriptions are age appropriate and align to the content descriptions.
>
> **For Year 7 to Year 10 (Year 7 entry) sequence**
> - Revise the Years 7 and 8 (Level 1) band description so the expectations are appropriate for a Level 1 entry point.

5.3   Content descriptions and content elaborations

General feedback

The purpose of the content descriptions is to "describe the knowledge, understanding, skills and processes that teachers are expected to teach, and students are expected to learn". The content elaborations are not mandatory and "are intended as support material only". With this in mind:

- the draft content descriptions across all bands tend to depend upon the content elaborations for meaning

- the draft content descriptions lack linguistic content and contain no references to the grammar, cohesive language features or linguistic elements (such as phonology, morphology and syntax) that teachers are expected to teach, and students are expected to learn

- successful teaching of grammar and cohesive language features in the target language is dependent upon learner understanding and successfully using these in English. The Languages and English curriculums should be complementary. The learning of language features in the Languages curriculum needs to occur concurrently with, or after, the same learning in English

- the amount of content to be covered, in relation to its breadth and the time on task, is not achievable

- the focus of the content is biased towards intercultural understanding, which is only one of the three aims set out for the curriculum. This bias comes at the cost of communicating in the target language

- the inclusion of examples linked to the content elaborations is appreciated by teachers. However, not all content elaborations are supported with examples

- the addition of key concepts, key processes and key text types clarifies the content descriptions in the Years 7 to 10 (Year 7 entry) sequence. This inclusion was received favourably and should be used in the Foundation to Year 10 sequence

- the relationship between Italian and each of the general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities is not evident in the curriculum content.

Foundation to Year 10 sequence-specific feedback

In some instances, the pitch of the content descriptions and the content elaborations is unrealistic. Illustrative examples of content descriptions that are pitched too high or need refinement include:

- Foundation to Year 2 (Level 1):

  - Content description 1.1: Naming and describing other people and things may be too ambitious for this age level. At this age, the learner is more focused on themselves and their likes and dislikes rather than the likes and dislikes of others.

  - Content description 1.2: "Games" can be interpreted as playing games about language rather than responding to or using language. If the content description is about "play" in the language, this needs to be more explicit and include roleplay, dress up, make-believe, i.e. a richer interpretation of learning through play as described by Early Childhood teachers.

  - Content description 1.4: This content description would be strengthened if meaning-making was embedded in it. Currently, the supporting content elaborations read as if the focus is only written text.

  - Content description 1.5: At this level, the language ability of learners is not sophisticated enough for them to share information using the target language.

  - Content description 1.10: The word "strange" should be avoided as it has a negative connotation and implies that anything different is odd.

  - Content description 1.12: This content description is too broad and could be split into:

    - "Understand that Italian sentences have a particular word order"

    - "Explore common grammatical structures in Italian".

- Years 7 and 8 (Level 3):

  - Content description 4.10: At this level, students are still developing the skills of language acquisition. It is unrealistic to expect them to provide language support for others.

Illustrative examples of content descriptions with content elaborations that are pitched too high or need refinement include:

- Foundation to Year 2 (Level 1):

  - Content description 1.1: The use of possessives and verbs would be difficult for students to apply given the gender variations required.

  - Content description 1.12: The use of definite articles would be better understood at a later age.

- Years 3 and 4 (Level 1):
  - Content description 2.2:
    - The content elaborations need to identify specific elements of language, such as rhyming, gestures, facial expressions and actions that contribute to language learning.
    - The elaboration "creating invitation cards to a party, to a game, to performances or class events" assumes that teachers will provide the necessary scaffolding in order for students to create these texts. It is suggested that it be refined to: "Write texts using models and modifying language to suit personal needs".
    - At this level, students will not have the language skills to make and play games.
    - How "participat[ing] in class experiences and activities" contributes to language learning needs to be identified. The elaborations need to identify specific elements of language such as rhyming, gestures, facial expressions and actions.
  - Content description 2.5:
    - The elaborations are pitched too high and are better suited to next band.
    - The description and elaborations do not explicitly state that students need to obtain, process, interpret and convey information from a range of spoken, written, and multimodal texts in order to develop the texts.
- Years 7 and 8 (Level 3):
  - Content description 4.6: At this level, the language ability of learners is not sophisticated enough for them to be "experimenting with language appropriate to genre such as … emotive language in monologues … [and] persuasive language in advertisements".
  - Content description 4.9: Translating requires a high level of skill, often beyond the capability of students at this level. It is unlikely that students at this level would be able to effectively transmit the meanings of a text rather than providing a superficial word-for-word account.

Years 7 to 10 (Year 7 entry) sequence-specific feedback

Limited feedback was received during consultation for the Italian Years 7 to 10 (Year 7 entry) sequence. In general, consultation participants felt that the pitch of the content descriptions and the content elaborations is unrealistic for entry into the learning of the target language at Year 7. Illustrative examples of content descriptions that are pitched too high include:

- Years 9 and 10 (Level 2):
  - Content description 2.10: At this level, the language ability of learners is not sophisticated enough for them to translate texts for different audiences.
  - Content description 2.15: "Decentre from their own primary linguistic and intercultural world and to reflect on being a communicator and user of language in a variety of social situations" is pitched above this band.

Illustrative examples of content descriptions with content elaborations that are pitched too high include:

- Years 7 and 8 (Level 1):
  - Content description 1.17: At this level, the language ability of learners is not sophisticated enough for them to manipulate grammar.

- Content description 1.23: At this level, the language ability of learners is not sophisticated enough for them to find "the language to discuss, question and explain their understanding to others non-judgmentally, for example without stereotyping".

- Years 9 and 10 (Level 2):

  - Content description 2.13: At this level, the language ability of learners is not sophisticated enough for them to reflect on texts in the target language.

  - Content description 2.13: Consultation participants were concerned about using social networking technologies unless the online environments are controlled and selected by the teacher.

Ways forward

For both pathways

- Revise the content descriptions to make clear what teachers are expected to teach and what students are expected to learn without the need to rely on the non-mandatory content elaborations.
- Decrease the number of content descriptions and revise them to sharpen their focus on all three aims that have been outlined for the curriculum.
- Revise the content elaborations to ensure that their pitch is appropriate for the band.
- Provide linguistic references to the grammar, cohesive language features or linguistic elements (such as phonology, morphology and syntax) that teachers are expected to teach, and students are expected to learn.
- Undertake a scan of the Italian curriculum against the *Australian Curriculum: English* to ensure the development of teaching of grammar and cohesive devices in the target language occurs concurrently with, or after, they have been taught in English.
- Provide examples for all content elaborations.
- Provide more than one content elaboration for all content descriptions.

For Foundation to Year 10 sequence

- Support teachers in using the content descriptions by identifying the:
  - key concepts
  - key processes
  - key text types.

5.4 Achievement standards

Consultation participants identified the following general concerns about the achievement standards.

- The achievement standards are a summary of content rather than showing progression of learning and quality of performance.

- Some achievement standards are too detailed, contain too much information and are not achievable in the time indicated.

- The achievement standards align to both the content descriptions and the non-mandatory content elaborations.

- The achievement standards lack reference to higher order thinking cognitions.

- A single achievement standard represents the standard of learning for two bands: the Foundation to Year 2 band and the Years 3 and 4 band.

Ways forward

For all pathways and entry points

- Revise the achievement standards to:
  - show the development of students' understandings and capacity with language skills
  - ensure they align only to the content descriptions and do not include the non-mandatory content elaborations.

For Foundation to Year 10 sequence

- Develop separate achievement standards for the Foundation to Year 2 and the Years 3 and 4 bands.

5.5 Glossary

Limited feedback on the glossary was received during consultation. Consultation participants raised concerns about:

- the definition for "reciprocal exchange", which needs to be clearer and simpler. Some suggestions for refinement include that "reciprocal exchange":
  - occurs in cross-cultural communication
  - requires people to be active, not passive, participants in an exchange
  - includes key elements such as noticing, comparing similarities and differences, reflection on self, reflection on others, and analysis and reflection of communicative choices
  - includes successful communication with others that is not only determined by what they do, but is also affected by what members of the other different languages and culture understand them to do
  - may require a participant to adjust language (verbal or non-verbal).
- the definition for "literacy", which needs to include current thinking about literacy as social practice occurring within a particular context.

Ways forward

- Refine the definition for "reciprocal exchange", considering the suggestions above.
- Expand the definition for "literacy" to include current thinking about literacy as social practice occurring within a particular context.
- Define "prosody" and "sandhi".

6. Appendix 1

The following are suggested edits to the preamble. The edited text is highlighted in yellow.

Preamble

The *Australian Curriculum: Languages* is designed to enable all students to engage in learning a language in addition to English. The design of the *Australian Curriculum: Languages* recognises the features that languages share as well as the distinctiveness of specific languages.

There are aspects of the curriculum that pertain to all languages. The key concepts of language, culture, and learning underpin the learning area. They also provide the basis for a common rationale and set of aims for all languages.

Language specificity

The curriculum content and achievement standards are different for specific languages because of inherent differences in the languages themselves.

Each language has its own distinctive structure, systems, conventions for use, related culture(s), place in the Australian and international communities, as well as its own history in Australian education.

The *Australian Curriculum: Languages* includes both language-specific curricula and a Framework for Aboriginal Languages and Torres Strait Islander Languages.

Language, culture and learning

The inter-relationship of language, culture, and learning provides the foundation for the *Australian Curriculum: Languages*.

In the languages learning area, the explicit focus is on the interconnectedness of language and intercultural understanding, allowing students to experience additional linguistic and cultural systems in diverse contexts. It offers the opportunity to explore how to communicate meaningfully in diverse contexts and how people interpret and make meaning across linguistic and cultural systems. These processes, productively-guided, lead to reflection on and analysis of the languages students are using and learning. For all students, learning a language involves working with, and moving between, at least two languages and cultures: the new language being learnt and the existing language(s) they know. This constant interplay between languages and cultures is integral to language learning and use. It is what makes the experience intercultural.

Learning languages is a reciprocal and dynamic process which involves interplay between the first language (or languages) and the new language or new domains of language use. This entails comparison and referencing between the two languages, which leads to the development of reflective dimensions of language learning. Noticing and comparing how two or more languages behave draws attention to how languages in general 'work', to how language and culture both shape and reflect experience. Being in two worlds at once encourages the processes of noticing, comparing, questioning, and developing deeper awareness of how language and culture shape identity.

Different learner biographies

Understanding who learners are, in both learning and life beyond school, is the starting point for developing their language learning. An increasingly varied range of students is learning languages in Australia in contemporary times. The changing pattern of migration to Australia is extending the range of languages that students bring with them to school and that the education system needs to respond to and harness. This means there are students

with varying degrees of experience of, and proficiency in, the target language and many other languages in many classrooms.

Learners come to learning languages with diverse linguistic, cultural, and personal profiles. They bring their individual:

- histories
- geographies
- previous experiences of, and relationships with, the target language
- particular motivations, expectations, and aspirations.

As unique, social, and cultural beings, students interpret the world and make sense of their experiences through their own social and cultural traditions, understanding, and values.

Learners of languages in Australia comprise three major groups:

- second language learners
- background language learners
- first language learners.

7. Appendix 2

The following are suggested edits to the rationale. Paragraphs and dot points have been reordered. Edited text is highlighted in yellow.

Rationale

Through learning languages, students acquire:

- essential communication skills in the target language

- an intercultural capability, and

- an understanding of the role of language and culture in human communication.

Language learning provides the opportunity for students to engage with the linguistic and cultural diversity of humanity, to reflect on their understanding of human experience in all aspects of social life, and on their own participation and ways of being in the world.

Learning languages broadens students' horizons to include the personal, social, and employment opportunities that an increasingly interconnected and interdependent world presents. The interdependence of countries means people in all spheres of life have to be able to negotiate experiences and meanings across languages and cultures. It has also brought the realisation that, despite the status of English as a world language, a capability in English alone is not sufficient. A bilingual or pluri-lingual capability is the norm in most parts of the world.

Learning languages:

- extends the capability to communicate in interculturally appropriate ways and extends literacy repertoires

- strengthens understanding of the nature and interconnectedness of language, culture, and the processes of communication

- strengthens intellectual and analytical capabilities and enhances creative and critical thinking

- develops understanding of how culture shapes world view and extends the learner's understanding of themselves, their own heritage, values, culture, and identity

- develops understanding of, and respect for, diversity and difference, and an openness to different perspectives and experiences.

Language capability contributes to the development of rich linguistic and cultural capabilities through which the community can engage socially, culturally, and economically in business, science, law, education, tourism, diplomacy, international relations and health.

Learning Aboriginal languages and Torres Strait Islander languages meets the needs and rights of young people to learn their own languages and recognises their significance 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 achieve a secure acceptance of their own identity and helps them to develop a wider recognition and understanding of their language, culture, land, and Country. This contributes to their well–being. For all students, learning Aboriginal languages and Torres Strait Islander languages provides a distinctive means of understanding the country in which they live, including the relationship between land, the environment, and people. The ongoing and necessary reclamation and revitalisation of these languages also contributes to reconciliation.