



# ANNUAL REPORT 2023

Multicultural Education and Languages Committee (MELC)

Report for the Minister for Education, Training and Skills



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The Multicultural Education and Languages Committee (MELC)

Department for Education

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## Introduction from the Chair



I am pleased to present the 2023 Multicultural Education and Languages Committee (MELC) Annual Report as the newly appointed Chair.

The Multicultural Education and Languages Committee is a Ministerial Advisory Committee whose responsibility includes to contribute to contemporary research, policy and practices that promote linguistic and cultural diversity education in South Australia. The Committee provides an exciting and contemporary vision to advance intercultural capability for global learning.

The year saw the appointment of a new committee, with three meetings held during 2023. The MELC endorsed the 2023-2024 MELC Workplan as a critical priority.

The MELC contributed feedback on the Royal Commission into Early Childhood Education and Care, the Purpose Statement for Public Education, National Framework for Respectful Relationships Education in Schools, and the Teacher's Registration Board draft Code of Conduct for teachers. Members also attended the Community Language Schools SA (CLSSA) Celebration of Multilingual Voices at Parliament House, and the National Community Language Conference at the University of Adelaide.

A snapshot of projects considered in 2023 included:

- Professional development opportunities provided by the Association of Independent Schools SA for culturally safe classrooms and reconciliation initiatives in Independent Schools
- Catholic Education SA's contribution to the Australian Curriculum languages review, language professional learning and networks, and response to the Italian Language Teacher Assistants program
- The Adelaide University Multilingual Voice Project
- Multicultural Youth SA Parent Engagement Research
- Community Language Schools SA (CLSSA) Early Learning and Raising Literacy projects.

As part of the MELC's strong continued support towards provision of English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EALD), the committee hosted a series of online seminars through an 'Expanding Understanding of EALD' project. The seminars were open to educators, leaders and education advisory officers from the three education sectors in South Australia and were facilitated by Professor Constant Leung, a world expert in EALD from the Department for Education and Professional Studies, King's College London. MELC is also proud to facilitate Professor Leung's visit to Adelaide in 2024 as

part of this project, where he will conduct a series of face-to-face educator seminars, a public lecture and a meeting with the Minister for Education, Training and Skills.

On behalf of the Committee, I thank the Hon Blair Boyer MP Minister for Education, Training and Skills and his office for their support and inspiration. I acknowledge the significant contribution and outstanding leadership of former Chair, Associate Professor Angela Scarino and retiring committee members. I thank Suzanne Bradshaw, Executive Officer, and all committee members for their expertise, commitment, and dedication. Appreciation is also extended to all three education sectors, principals and professional associations, teachers, universities, community organisations, professional associations, and key stakeholders for their generosity in collaboration.

The MELC serves an essential role in providing an exciting and contemporary moral imperative for why and how education can explore new possibilities, speak a new language and deliver a new pedagogy in languages and multicultural education and the internationalisation of education.

Mr Noel Mifsud  
Chair, MELC

## The committee

### Role and purpose

The MELC provides advice to the South Australian Minister for Education, Training and Skills on three interrelated areas of education: languages education, multicultural education and the internationalisation of education, with a strong focus on linguistic and cultural diversity and wellbeing. It works across the three schooling sectors, as well as community schools (encompassing the CLSSA program) and the university sector, to ensure its work permeates across all learners.

In undertaking this work, the committee draws upon contemporary research, policy and practices available locally, nationally and internationally, and the knowledge, expertise and experience of committee members.

The committee is supported by the Strategic Policy and External Relations Division of the Department for Education.

### Terms of reference

The committee is responsible for providing advice to the Minister on:

- developing strategies for promoting, enhancing and strengthening languages education, including EALD
- developing understandings and practices in schools to:
  - engage children and young people with linguistic and cultural diversity
  - develop intercultural capabilities of children and young people to enable them to contribute as global citizens
- supporting schools to increase the number of students successfully studying a language
- supporting the maintenance and development of languages and cultures in all South Australian schools and community languages schools
- expanding the capacity for ethnic and community language schools to provide SACE Languages subjects
- developing models for the professional development of teachers of languages
- supporting the internationalisation of teaching and learning in South Australia
- other matters referred to it by the Minister.

### MELC membership

Members of MELC (see Table 1) are appointed by the Minister for Education, Training and Skills, based on their knowledge and experience of multicultural education, languages education and the internationalisation of education.

A newly appointed MELC was formed in 2023, following an Expression of Interest process.

**Outgoing Chair**, Associate Professor Angela Scarino has been the Chair of MELC from its inception in December 2015 and was Chair of the former MELC from 2013 to 2015.

Newly appointed Chair of MELC, Mr Noel Mifsud has previously served on the former MELC Committee from 2000-2003.

Table 1: MELC members during 2023

<b>Mr Noel Mifsud</b>	<b>Chairperson, independent</b>
<b>Ms Deonne Smith</b>	<b>Department for Education</b>
<b>Ms Teresa Cimmino</b>	<b>Catholic Education South Australia (CESA)</b>
<b>Mrs Deb Dalwood</b>	<b>Association of Independent Schools of South Australia (AISSA)</b>
<b>Associate Professor Kayoko Enomoto</b>	<b>South Australian Vice-Chancellors Committee (SAVCC)</b>
<b>Ms Shaza Ravaji</b>	<b>South Australian Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs Commission (SAMEAC)</b>
<b>Associate Professor Harry Savelsberg</b>	<b>Multicultural Youth SA (MYSA)</b>
<b>Ms Sally Letcher</b>	<b>SACE Board of South Australia</b>
<b>Mr Brett Shuttleworth</b>	<b>Community Language Schools SA (CLSSA)</b>
<b>Ms Bronwen McClelland</b>	<b>Educational leader (Principal, Director)</b>
<b>Ms Meredith Beck</b>	<b>Leading educator</b>
<b>Ms Samoda Silva</b>	<b>Student representative</b>
<b>Ms Maria Iovino</b>	<b>Early Childhood/Preschool Director</b>
<b>Ms Truphena Mahindu</b>	<b>Parent representative</b>
<b>Ms Anna Strzelecki</b>	<b>Aboriginal and Indigenous communities representative</b>
<b>Ms Irene Evangelista Rowe</b>	<b>Community representative</b>

## MELC secretariat

The committee's secretariat provides research, as well as administrative and organisational support. In 2023, secretarial support for MELC was 0.5 FTE, provided by Ms Suzanne Bradshaw, Executive Officer.

## MELC meetings

Generally, MELC meetings are held four times a year (quarterly). At each meeting, representatives from a particular sector, organisation and/or community group are invited to present to the committee on the achievements and challenges of their work. This provides MELC members with the opportunity to experience firsthand the programs being run in the fields of languages education, multicultural education and the internationalisation of education. It also provides the opportunity to canvas diverse perspectives to enrich members' own understandings and enable the committee to better advise the Minister.

Reports from members are an important part of MELC’s information-sharing processes. They provide a mechanism for keeping MELC up to date with what is happening in the sectors and organisations represented on the committee. Due to the newly appointed Committee in early 2023, three meetings were held during the year (see Table 2).

Table 2: MELC Meetings 2023

Date	Focus Areas	Presenter/s
8 June 2023	MELC Workplan Venue: CESA and Online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Luke Fraser, Director, Strategy and Coordination, Department for Education – Purpose Statement for Public Education</li> <li>• Associate Professor Harry Savelsberg, MYSA – Parent Engagement Research</li> </ul>
10 August 2023	Policy and Strategy Advice Venue: School of Languages and Online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Associate Professor Angela Scarino, and Dr Michelle Kohler, University of South Australia – Multilingual Voices</li> <li>• Ms Bronwen McClelland, MELC representative, Educational leader (Principal, Director), MELC – Linguistic and cultural diversity</li> <li>• Mr Brett Shuttleworth, CLSSA</li> <li>• Ms Kayoko Enomoto, South Australian Vice-Chancellors Committee – Teachers Registration Board – consultation on the draft Code of Conduct for teachers</li> </ul>
21 September 2023	Policy and Strategy Advice Venue: AISSA and Online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ms Kate Mount, Senior Educational Consultant at AISSA – Reconciliation initiatives in Independent Schools</li> <li>• Mr Clayton Cruse, Department for Education – International Decade of Indigenous Languages</li> <li>• Ms Amy Macken, Department for Education – Closing the gap for Aboriginal languages through education</li> </ul>



## Provision of policy, strategy and advice

One of the key focus areas in the MELC 2023-2024 Workplan is contributing expertise and advice to the education sectors and to state and national policies and practices through the lens of catering for linguistic and cultural diversity.

During 2023, MELC provided advice in areas as outlined below.

### Public Education Strategy

The MELC was invited to comment on the draft Public Education Strategy as presented to the committee by Luke Fraser, Director, Strategy and Coordination, Department for Education – Purpose Statement for Public Education at its meeting of 8 June 2023.

The MELC proposed that children and young people bring their home languages and cultures to the learning environment, emphasising the value that working actively with these languages and cultures brings to all children and young people, which is an important asset to our state and society. Linguistic and cultural diversity is a rich resource and there is an inextricable link between language, culture, identity and wellbeing.

### Expanding understanding in EALD

#### Background

In November 2019, MELC hosted a visit by Professor Constant Leung, Department of Education and Professional Studies, King's College London. The visit included an EALD Forum, a public lecture, a meeting with the Minister for Education, and dedicated sessions with the three schooling sectors.

Feedback from participants in the various activities indicated a clear need to strengthen and reinvigorate approaches to EALD. It also called for the provision of more opportunities for key educators, teachers and leaders to work together across sectors with leading experts, such as Professor Leung, to expand understandings of the latest research in the field and to discuss contemporary approaches and practices to EALD in school education.

The MELC was commended by all participants for facilitating this cross-sectoral discussion forum. Sector representatives appreciated the rare opportunity to speak with such an expert in EALD in both formal and informal settings.

Professor Leung indicated interest in continuing to work with educators in South Australia to strengthen provision of EALD in a strategic way.

A subsequent visit was proposed to build on the interest generated by the successful 2019 visit. However, this was delayed due to the restrictions on international travel and in-person gatherings imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

To determine specific needs in extending the knowledge base and understandings of EALD for key educators in the field, a consultation forum was organised. The roundtable discussion, held on 22 June 2022, brought together teachers, leaders and education advisory officers from each of the three education sectors to discuss the most pertinent issues and areas of need from the perspective of their contexts, and the best processes for the project.

The discussion focused on three key questions:

1. What are the issues related to provision of EALD support in schools that should be addressed through this project?
2. Who should be involved?
3. How should the project be organised?

Overwhelmingly, the roundtable attendees agreed that there remains a need for further contemporary professional learning for EALD educators, leaders and officers involved in the provision of EALD support in schools. Attendees also provided advice on the proposed professional learning project involving Professor Leung.

## Teacher Registration Board – Code of Conduct

The MELC provided a response to the request from the Teacher’s Registration Board (TRB) consultation process for a proposed code of conduct for teachers.

The *Teachers Registration and Standards Act 2004* provides TRB with the ability to publish or adopt codes of conduct and professional standards. The aim of the Code is to support the work of TRB by making the behaviour expected of teachers in South Australia transparent and to safeguard the public interest by protecting children and young people, while also promoting and maintaining public confidence in the teaching profession.

## Early learning

During 2022, MELC commissioned an advice paper on languages and early learning. The aim of this advice paper was to explore aspects of languages learning in early learning settings and investigate the use of the Early Learning Languages Australia (ELLA) app as well as other languages learning practices in the SA context.

Following review and synthesis of current research literature related to early-start language acquisition, consultations were conducted with key stakeholders, including those at the forefront of the provision of early childhood languages education. This included educators and educational officers from across the three educational sectors: The Department for Education, CESA and AISSA. The paper considers the research in light of current policy and government initiatives and reveals insights into what is currently happening in local early childhood languages learning initiatives, programs, and experiences.

Through this process, three key themes were established:

- Theme 1 – A vital need for a naturalistic and holistic approach to early-start languages education
- Theme 2 – Needs and issues related to policy and practice implementation and integration of languages education
- Theme 3 – Opportunities and challenges in using the ELLA app.

Current research and the firsthand perspectives of those who work in fields related to early childhood languages learning highlights that there are many advantages of languages learning in the first five years of childhood. This investigation revealed the increasing recognition that bilingualism holds many benefits including developmental, educational, social, and wellbeing. As the evidence suggests, early-start bilingualism (at ages 0–5), including learning home languages and additional languages, is beneficial for positive early learning experiences, successful English outcomes and achieving a sense of community and belonging. In the area of languages curriculum and pedagogy, a much-needed paradigm shift is emerging towards taking a multilingual and intercultural stance in language teaching and learning. Yet, implementing and integrating such multilingual and intercultural languages learning initiatives, programs and experiences involves considering the range of needs, issues and opportunities identified in this investigation.

MELC members have provided feedback on the draft advice paper.

## Ministerial Award for Leadership in Languages and Culture

The Ministerial Award for Leadership in Languages and Cultures is an annual award, provided by MELC on behalf of the Minister. It is administered by the Australia Day Council of South Australia (ADCSA) and presented at the Australia Day Awards ceremony each year at Government House. The award has two categories.

### Category 1: A high school student

This award is designed to promote the study of languages and the development of intercultural capabilities. It is awarded to a high school student who has shown outstanding commitment to their study of languages and cultures at school, and who seeks to advocate for a multilingual and culturally diverse Australia by fostering engagement in linguistic and cultural diversity.

The criteria for this Award includes that the student candidate:

- has sound capability in more than one language
- shows outstanding commitment to the study of languages and cultures
- demonstrates effective intercultural capabilities
- fosters engagement in linguistic and cultural diversity within the school and/or the broader community.

### Category 2: A young person aged 24 years or less

This category is awarded to a young person who has demonstrated outstanding commitment to advocacy for a multilingual and culturally diverse Australia and strong community leadership.

The criteria for this Award includes that the student candidate:

- shows commitment to advocacy for a multilingual and culturally diverse Australia
- demonstrates outstanding community leadership and effective communication skills
- demonstrates sound capability in more than one language and the ability to operate successfully in linguistic and culturally diverse environments.

Nominations are received from August to November each year. Candidates must be nominated by another person or a group, such as a community organisation or school. The selection panel comprises representatives from MELC and ADCSA. An independent person may also be selected to the panel at the discretion of MELC and ADCSA.

The award recipient assumes an ambassadorial role for MELC, including being invited to MELC meetings and events.

## 2023 Award for Leadership in Languages and Cultures: Category 1

### Recipients –

Mr Thomas Pearson and Mr Coen Pearson – Meningie Area School



*Thomas And Coen Pearson at Australia Day Awards Ceremony*

Thomas and Coen Pearson are proud, young Ngarrindjeri men and senior leaders within the Meningie Area School. As brothers they have a strong partnership and commitment to their Ngarrindjeri language and culture and are passionate about sharing this knowledge across their school and local community.

This commitment and passion to their First Nation's culture is demonstrated through Thomas and Coen's eagerness and enthusiasm to regularly present engaging Welcomes to Country in Ngarrindjeri. Thomas and Coen use these moments as an educational opportunity to share language and provide a deeper connection to Country with their peers and the broader community.

Thomas and Coen's passion also extends towards mental health and wellbeing, and they have worked collaboratively with The Rural City of Murray Bridge to implement additional support to young people that may be experiencing disengagement within the community. This work has resulted in the delivery of programs offering hip hop and street art classes to provide a much-needed creative outlet and inspire confidence in young people.

#### Commendations –

##### Mr William D'Angelo – Concordia College

William D'Angelo is a proud Kokatha man and an advocate for Indigenous students and culture within his school community at Concordia College. He demonstrates a passion for learning and connecting with other languages and cultures such as German and Indonesian.

William collaborates with the College's Indigenous Elder to guide, educate and enhance the school's engagement with Indigenous peoples and participates in the Indigenous Mentoring Program offered through the Association of Independent Schools SA.

William is also a member of his school's Reconciliation Action Group and through his role, provides guidance on cultural issues throughout the school community. William also represents Concordia College at official events and activities relating to reconciliation.

## Award for Leadership in Languages and Cultures: Category 2

### Recipient –

Ms Tahlia Reissen – Avenues College



Tahlia studied Auslan at school at the Avenues College and completed a Diploma of Interpreting, becoming a qualified Auslan/English interpreter. She has returned to Avenues College working as a Bilingual Support Officer in the Centre of Deaf Education supporting the education and wellbeing of Deaf and Hard of Hearing students.

Tahlia has established a Transport Training Program for Deaf students at the Centre. This program develops students' road safety and social skills enabling them to navigate confidently and safely within the community, providing them with greater independence. Tahlia works collaboratively with school educators in the mainstream setting to develop inclusive strategies that enable Deaf students to engage in all learning opportunities and to share their language and culture with their peers. Tahlia is also a strong advocate for Deaf students to be able to access appropriate mental health support in Auslan.

Tahlia's passion is working in linguistically and culturally diverse environments and supporting new arrivals in SA to overcome linguistic challenges, particularly students with a disability and those who use non-conventional sign language.

### Commendations –

Mr Mussa Nawroazi – Ambassador for Youth Opportunities

As a compassionate community leader, Mussa Nawroazi has devoted countless voluntary hours supporting newly arrived refugees who have escaped humanitarian crisis and conflict to feel safe and find their sense of belonging in South Australia.

Mussa is an Afghan refugee and his mother tongue is Dari. After the fall of Afghanistan in 2021, Mussa generously volunteered his time with Australian Migration Options supporting new arrivals in our state from Afghanistan, translating, interpreting, and assisting them to complete applications.

As an Ambassador for the charitable organisation Youth Opportunities, Mussa inspires confidence in young people, particularly new migrants and refugees to embrace new opportunities and to maintain and develop their linguistic and cultural heritage.

## Appendix A: Sub-committees 2023

### Award for Leadership in Languages and Cultures

*Purpose: to serve on the selection panel and provide advice in relation to this award.*

The selection panel for the 2023 awards included the following MELC members:

- Ms Samoda Silva
- Ms Teresa Cimmino
- Mr Brett Shuttleworth
- Ms Suzanne Bradshaw, Executive Officer, MELC

### Early Learning

*Purpose: to provide advice in relation to matters relating to early learning through the lens of linguistic and cultural diversity.*

- Mr Noel Mifsud, Chair
- Mrs Deb Dalwood
- Ms Suzanne Bradshaw, Executive Officer, MELC

### Expanding Understanding of EALD

*Purpose: to provide advice in relation to matters relating to EALD and to facilitate the Expanding Understanding of EALD project.*

- Mr Noel Mifsud, Chair
- Ms Deb Dalwood
- Ms Teresa Cimmino
- Ms Bronwen McClelland
- Mr Brett Shuttleworth
- Ms Suzanne Bradshaw, Executive Officer, MELC

### Parent Engagement

*Purpose: to provide advice in relation to Parent Engagement through the lens of linguistic and cultural diversity.*

- Mr Noel Mifsud, Chair
- Associate Professor Harry Savelsberg
- Ms Truphena Mahindu
- Ms Suzanne Bradshaw, Executive Officer, MELC

## Appendix B: Other forums with MELC representation

### The School of Languages Council – MELC representative

*Purpose: to represent MELC at School of Languages Council meetings.*

- Mr Brett Shuttleworth