



CANBERRA ACADEMY OF LANGUAGES

CAL Business Case for ACT 2023-2024 Budget

March 2023

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Executive summary

What is proposed

This submission puts the business case for a centrally delivered, government-funded languages education strategy to supplement the ACT Education Directorate's language pathways plan. The proposal is that:

1. The ACT Government takes over the functions of Canberra Academy of Languages (CAL) in 2024 for the delivery of languages education programs to supplement those in schools, as set out in the section below on implementation.
2. The ACT Government may opt to retain and use branding established by CAL, or to implement its own branding in the manner of its choosing.
3. A handover occurs in Semester 2 of 2023, to ensure a smooth transition.

The ACT Government should assume responsibility for the operation of the CAL, to ensure equity in access to languages programs for students in all areas of the ACT. Planning and consultation should be undertaken for implementation of CAL programs by ACT Government from the start of the 2024 school year. This will provide clarity for the enrolment process with ongoing senior secondary intakes. Consultation should take place in Semester 2 of 2023, to ensure a seamless handover of CAL programs for commencement of CAL as a government-run entity in 2024.

The current problem

The ACT's provisions in languages education for the years of schooling are currently inadequate and are not delivering the results that should be expected in an educational jurisdiction with all the advantages and good reasons for languages education that exist here. Availability and retention of teachers of languages are ongoing problems. There is insufficient uptake in languages learning and proficiency outcomes are inadequate. This is implicitly recognised in the Second Action Plan for the ACT Multicultural Framework.¹

Our jurisdiction is not alone in facing this problem. The [2019] NSW Curriculum Review Interim Report² states (page 93): "The Review is persuaded that a long-term objective should be to increase significantly language learning in NSW schools. Currently, Australia lags many other countries ... in the number of students studying a second language. In an increasingly globalised world, intercultural and language skills will be essential to international engagement and are likely to deliver social, political and economic benefits ... There is strong evidence that language learning also increases students' understandings of their first language, improves literacy levels, and promotes a range of other cognitive skills." A study by Stephanie Clayton, University of Tasmania, found that low enrolments in languages are not caused by lack of interest, and that there are significant systemic barriers to participation in languages education in schools.³

Advantages of the proposal

The ACT is arguably best placed of all jurisdictions to take a positive step in addressing the problem identified above. This initiative will supplement the locality-based languages pathways planning and will address the substantial need for provision alongside those pathways to cater for families with special reasons to pursue the learning of languages not offered in the pathways – for example, because of family or friendship connections, or because the families have moved from a different district and have committed to the learning of a language where they came from. This solution is used in many other Australian jurisdictions.

Students who enrol with CAL are typically bilingual/multilingual or aspire to be so. Research published by Cambridge University in November 2021 shows the benefits for students who self-identify as multilingual. According to an article on the university's website⁴, students who self-identify as multilingual perform better at GCSE. A study of more than 800 school students concluded that young people who consider themselves 'multilingual' tend to perform better across a wide range of subjects at school, regardless of whether they are actually fluent in another language. This is a recent instance of research that shows a wide range of benefits from well-implemented language education programs.

CAL is a proven, demand driven institution, that is highly regarded in the education community in the ACT and beyond. The rationale for strong languages education provision in the ACT is further discussed below in the section on the importance of languages education.

¹ ACT Multicultural Framework, <https://www.communityservices.act.gov.au/multicultural/act-multicultural-framework>

² NSW Curriculum Review Interim Report, Professor Geoff Masters, ACER, 2019, <https://www.nswcurriculumreview.nesa.nsw.edu.au/pdfs/interimreport/chapters/NSW-Curriculum-Review-Interim-Report.pdf>

³ <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1111/flan.12605> and <https://theconversation.com/3-barriers-that-stop-students-choosing-to-learn-a-language-in-high-school-178033> - the article in The Conversation also includes links to other articles relevant to this.

⁴ <https://www.cam.ac.uk/research/news/students-who-self-identify-as-multilingual-perform-better-at-gcse>

Current context

Establishment and purpose of CAL

Established in 2016, CAL expands opportunities for language learning in the Canberra region. Year 11-12 students and early access students (high school students commencing selected senior secondary subjects early and who have school endorsement and the Board of Senior Secondary Studies (BSSS) approval) can study their chosen languages where these courses are not available through their schools or other providers. CAL's purpose is to complement, not replace, existing viable language learning programs in schools, and to enable students to consolidate and improve their proficiency in a language other than English. CAL courses lead to unit credits for the ACT Senior Secondary Certificate. Scores can contribute to students' Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) if the scores are among their best four course scores.

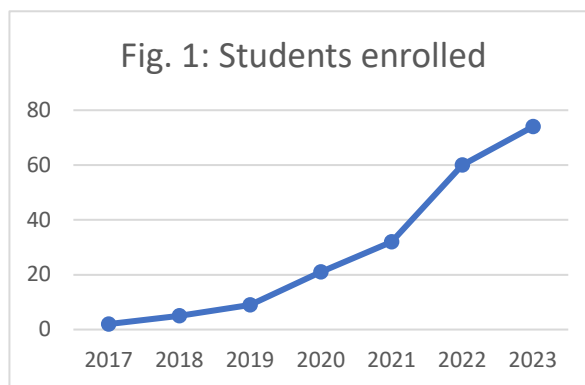
Evolution of CAL programs

With CAL now in its seventh year of operation, our student enrolment numbers have increased from two in 2017 to 74 at the time of writing. The number of languages taught has increased from one in 2017 to six in 2022-23. Languages currently taught are French, German, Japanese, Korean, Spanish and Tamil.

CAL's students and their families are strongly committed to the study of languages. At the time of writing in the 2023 school year, we have students enrolled from 19 schools – both government and non-government schools. There is an increasingly large number of stakeholders in the ACT community with an interest in the long-term continuation of these programs. For some government secondary colleges, CAL is now the main provider of languages.

At a glance – students, schools, languages:

2017: 2 students, 2 schools, 1 language
2018: 5 students, 4 schools, 1 language
2019: 9 students, 6 schools (incl. CIT), 2 languages
2020: 21 students, 12 schools, 4 languages
2021: 32 students, 13 schools, 5 languages
2022: 60 students, * 19 schools, 6 languages
2023: 74 students, * 19 schools, 6 languages



* The figure for 2022 is the average of enrolments in the two semesters. For 2023, it is based on Semester 1.

We are teaching more than half of the possible ten languages that we may currently offer under the ACT senior secondary curriculum. CAL may run teaching programs in one or more additional languages in 2024. Other languages under consideration are Arabic, Hindi, Indonesian, and Italian. CAL does not offer Chinese, as there is already an established, registered provider for this, and under our charter (Appendix 1), we undertake to complement existing provisions for language learning in the ACT.

Past submissions to ACT Government

As stated in our submission to the ACT Government in 2017 as part of the Future of Education Conversation, we established our programs as a proof-of-concept. We were ready at that time to commit to running the programs for two additional years (2018 and 2019). As stated in our charter, CAL recognises the importance of language rights, including the right of learners to aspire to, or to maintain and develop, bilingual or multilingual capabilities. Students should be able to access programs in the languages of their choice. This should not depend on the district of the ACT in which they live or attend their day schools. It is an issue of equity. Until now, this vision for language education in the ACT has not been taken up by the government.

Since the first submission in 2017, we have lodged budget submissions and updates in October 2019, December 2020, March 2021, August 2021 and May 2022. Copies are on the ACT Government's Budget Consultation website. It was never envisaged that we would still be running the programs in 2023; and with every successive year, there is a bigger stakeholder group of students, families and schools relying on us. It is a priority for us to secure a succession plan, and to honour students' commitment to language learning in the ACT.

Handover arrangements

Cost and terms of transfer

The Government is invited to consider reimbursement of the Convener’s loan, based on the amount of that loan at the time of the changeover, or to negotiate an appropriate reimbursement amount. The Convener’s loan currently stands at \$40,000. Depending on the number of student enrolments, the number of classes and the effect on income and expenditure, the amount of this loan may vary between now and the time of transfer of responsibility. We would seek assurances about the continuity of programs after transition. As stated in the previous section, it is a priority for us to secure a reliable succession plan, to honour the commitment demonstrated by our students, their families and their schools to language learning. A dependable success plan is required for continuation of CAL programs beyond 2023. The time frames outlined below are also essential considerations.

Basis for transfer of responsibility

A memorandum of understanding would provide the planning foundation for the transfer of responsibility. Points to be addressed in the memorandum would include the following:

- Governance, policies, and program delivery after transition
- Charter (the current version attached at Appendix 1)
- Prioritising purposeful use of the target language in the delivered programs
- Scope of curriculum
- Continuity of provision for families with students currently enrolled
- Reimbursement of the Convener’s loan or of an agreed portion of the loan
- Management of arrangements for composite classes
- Online presence during and after transition (administrative and resources websites and social media)
- Award under which teachers would be paid after transition and provisions specific to the context.

Table 1: Timeline for transition

Time frame	Event/action	Action by
March 2023	Draft budget case prepared	CAL Convener, CAL Advisory Panel, CAL reference group
March 2023	Consultation with stakeholders	CAL Convener, CAL Advisory Panel
March 2023	CAL business case submitted	CAL Convener
April-May 2023	Preview of handover information, memorandum of understanding	CAL Convener, CAL Advisory Panel, ACT Education Directorate
June 2023	Commitment on the proposed transition, to enable preparation of programs and staffing arrangements for 2024 and for induction of the 2024 student intake	ACT Chief Minister/Treasurer
August 2023	Planning for CAL Information Evening	CAL Convener, Ainslie School Principal, Ainslie School Deputy Principal, CAL Director of Studies, CAL Registrar
Thursday 21 September 2023	CAL Information Evening for 2024 prospective students and their families (event scheduled Week 10 of Term 3 in the 2023 school year)	CAL Convener, Ainslie School Principal, Ainslie School Deputy Principal, CAL Director of Studies, CAL Registrar
October-December 2023	Enrolment processing – enrolment forms, language eligibility forms	CAL Convener, CAL Registrar, CAL Director of Studies
Tuesday 13 December 2023	CAL End of Year Ceremony (final week of the 2023 school year)	CAL Convener, Ainslie School Principal, CAL Director of Studies, CAL Registrar, invited speaker(s)
January 2024	CAL Summer School	CAL teachers
February 2024	CAL Registration Evening (Week 1 of the 2024 school year)	CAL Convener, Ainslie School Principal, Ainslie School Deputy Principal, CAL Director of Languages, CAL Administration Officer
February 2024	Commencement of CAL classes (Week 2 of the 2024 school year)	CAL Director of Languages, CAL Administration Officer, CAL class teachers

Implementation plan

Focus of programs in the first year of operation as a government-run entity

The focus of delivery in the first year of operation as a government-run entity would be the senior secondary language learning programs to supplement those available in colleges, implementing the model and systems now in place with CAL. CAL programs would continue to be delivered after school hours, so that students' access to them is not affected by individual school timetables. There would be a transition of responsibility, where CAL becomes the entity through which the ACT Education Directorate provides a supplementary, cross-sectoral, languages education delivery mode, to supplement programs provided by schools.

Languages to be taught in 2024 would include those now taught by CAL (French, German, Japanese, Korean, Spanish and Tamil), as well as any additional senior secondary courses in languages identified through this year's subject selection process for 2024. Possible additional languages for 2024 are Arabic, Hindi, Indonesian, and Italian.

Inclusion of programs for the high school years (Years 7 to 10), and for primary years, could follow in the future. All interstate equivalents of CAL encompass primary and secondary schooling.



Figure 2 : CAL classes in session

Venue/premises: Ainslie School

Our current venue, Ainslie School, should remain the venue for CAL programs. The school's location at 33 Donaldson Street Braddon is ideal logistically for centrally delivered programs within ACT, with its close proximity to light rail and the City Bus Interchange (Fig. 4). There is a well-established partnership with the school's principal and staff team, resulting in benefits on both sides, and well-established procedures and communication processes for CAL's operations within the premises. Continuation of program delivery on two or at most three evenings at a single venue is recommended. This maximises opportunities for collaborative practices and reciprocal support among CAL teachers.

Benefits to CAL:

- Central location
- Proximity to public transport – light rail, bus interchange
- Opportunities for collaborative practice with programs in a range of languages co-located at one site
- Professional connections with staff and leadership team at Ainslie School
- Establishment of systems and facilities in one stable long-term location.

Benefits to Ainslie School:

- Collaboration in relation to languages, particularly for the school in engaging with students' home languages
- Provision of additional systems and facilities such as plasma display, SMART Board, copy printer, CAL wireless broadband
- Enhanced security with occupancy on two to three evenings each week
- Networking in the fields of languages and English as an additional language or dialect (EAL/D).

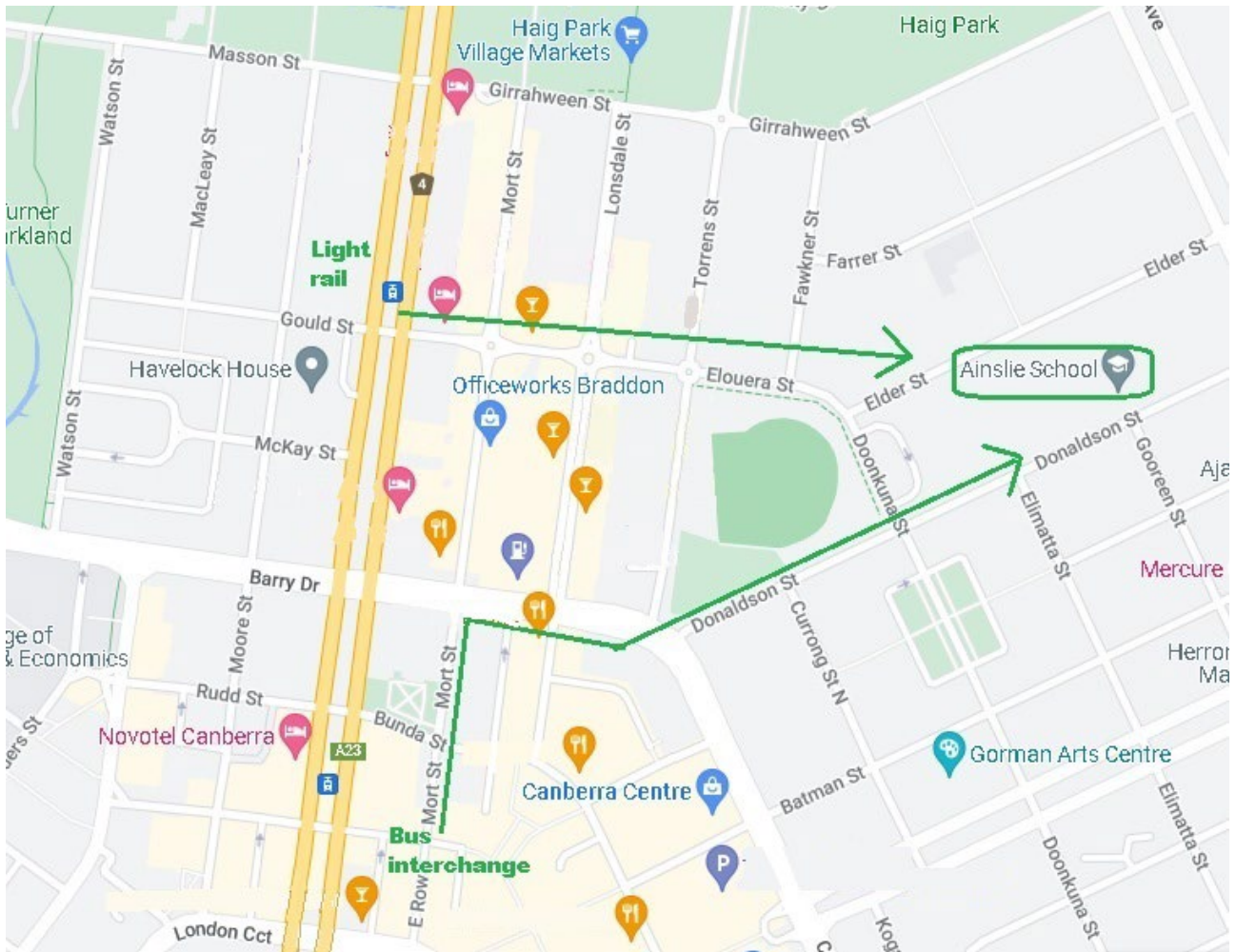


Figure 3: Proximity of Ainslie School to transport services.

Director of Languages

A Director of Languages would coordinate CAL programs. This role, and others listed below, would be funded by government from the range of funding sources selected during the transition phase. This role should at least equate to a deputy principal role. It could encompass the current Director of School and Director of Studies roles, or these two roles could be retained as separate part-time positions. It may include languages coordination for P-12 or a subset of those year levels, or it may encompass only senior secondary languages studies. If the latter, it would include responsibility for Year 9-10 students participating under BSSS Early Access, as well as students in Years 11-12.

The Director of Languages position would include responsibility for the areas listed below.

- Certification, including related aspects of BSSS ACT Certification System (ACS) database such as assessment data entry and communication with BSSS Certification Team.
- Communication with CAL class teachers.
- Communication with day schools.
- Coordination of material for the CAL administrative and resources websites.
- Curriculum and assessment planning and coordination.
- Enrolments, class lists, and related aspects of BSSS ACS database such as entry of student details.
- Financial planning.
- Liaison with Ainslie School principal and other members of the school leadership team.
- Maintenance of the CAL Facebook and Twitter presence, supported by web services provider.
- Moderation, including chairing of CAL meshing consultation meetings; collation of copies of assessment instruments and student responses; communication with BSSS Quality Assurance & Curriculum Team.
- Planning and implementation of CAL events such as information evenings, parent interviews and end of year ceremony.
- Reports – coordination, processing and distribution of mid-semester and semester reports.
- Scaling of unit scores.
- Social media and online presence relating to CAL programs.

Administration

There will need to be an administrative officer, who should be on site from mid-afternoon until after commencement of CAL teaching programs in the evening, on the days when there are scheduled classes. This would be a part-time role and could be combined with another part-time role within the school that operates in day school hours. Currently, classes are scheduled on Wednesdays and Thursdays. Tuesdays could be added, if required for reasons of venue capacity or teacher availability. Mondays should be avoided if possible, because of the number of public holidays that occur on Mondays, and Fridays should be avoided, to allow flexibility for students working on Friday evenings and for families wishing to depart for weekend travel. The administration officer would have responsibilities that include:

- processing enquiries and enrolments
- invoicing and receipting
- induction of new CAL students
- creating and maintaining enrolment records
- managing documentation including CAL enrolment forms and BSSS language eligibility forms
- following up incomplete forms, particularly the day school endorsement section of the CAL enrolment forms and the declaration section of the BSSS language eligibility forms
- data entry on the BSSS ACS database.

This officer may have responsibility, as well, for assisting the School Business Manager in tracking and reporting on CAL financial transactions, such as resources purchased from publishers.

Information technology

An information technology officer (ITO) should be appointed to provide IT support to the broader school as well as to CAL. The ITO would be responsible for:

- enabling student and staff access to information technology resources, including CAL students and staff
- wireless networking, including the mobile broadband connection (required for teachers and students who are not at government schools) and wi-fi mesh system that CAL has set up during 2022-23
- display systems, including the CAL plasma screen and the CAL Smart Board
- printing, scanning and copying systems, including the CAL Fuji Xerox copy printer.

Because CAL programs will continue to run after school hours, these systems and devices will also be available for Ainslie School staff to use throughout the school day. The CAL wireless networking system is a useful addition to the standard “ONE” wireless network.

Employment award for CAL teachers and pay arrangements

ACT Government can establish staff salary arrangements consistent with its commitments under existing enterprise agreements.

Governance

It is proposed that CAL becomes an educational unit attached for administrative purposes to Ainslie School. There are existing arrangements within ACT education that are not dissimilar, including the Erindale Leisure Centre, which is managed by Erindale College, but which also has its own website⁵ and Facebook page⁶, and has operational hours outside the normal school/college day. Introductory English Centres⁷ also are similar in terms of student catchment being outside the Priority Enrolment Areas of the school that administers them, but they differ from CAL because they operate during standard school hours.

CAL should retain present arrangements as far as possible in the way it currently operates with programs, interacts with students’ day schools, and projects to the community. It is recommended that CAL’s administrative and resources websites should be kept operational and that there should be continuing involvement of the CAL Advisory Panel. We recommend that one to two members of CAL Advisory Panel be appointed ex officio to the Ainslie School Board, and that two members of the Ainslie School Board (one being the Principal or Deputy Principal) be appointed ex officio to the CAL Advisory Panel. The current CAL Convener would be available to chair the CAL Advisory Panel for at least one year from the time of handover.

CAL should continue as a member of the Australian Network of Government Language Schools (ANGLS). This network is a valuable source of insights on common areas of interest for its members. The other participants include the Schools of Languages in NSW, Victoria and South Australia; the Language(s) Centres in the Northern Territory; and the Distance Education Centres in Rockhampton and Cairns; as well as the Open

⁵ <http://www.activelc.com.au/>

⁶ <https://www.facebook.com/ActiveLeisureCentre/>

⁷ https://www.education.act.gov.au/public-school-life/public-schools-in-the-act/introductory_english_centres_act_government

Access College in Adelaide (which is essentially a distance education centre). These organisations have student enrolments ranging from several hundred to several thousand each. In 2019, CAL hosted the ANGLS Conference in Canberra. In 2020, the Darwin Languages Centre hosted the conference online, and in 2021, the SA School of Languages hosted the conference online. Ainslie School Principal, Wendy Cave, participated in that conference.

Financial implications

Funding base

Currently, all operational costs for CAL are derived from student enrolment fees, which are sponsored either by their schools or their families. As of 2023, about half are sponsored by their schools and about half are sponsored by their families.

For schools, it can be beneficial to refer students to CAL when there are insufficient students to form a class, or when a teacher cannot be recruited at the school level. The recruitment issue is sometimes about the portion of a full-time teaching role that a school can offer. Even if a school is prepared to cross-subsidise within its staffing arrangements to form a small class for a particular language, there is no certainty that a teacher will accept a 0.2 position, given that it does not provide the teacher with a living wage; and the teacher's other teaching subject areas may not be relevant to the requirement of the school. Even if a teacher initially accepts a part-time teaching role, there is no guarantee of teacher retention, if another employer offers that teacher a full-time job (either inside or outside of education). These kinds of situations continually confront schools when they are making decisions about staffing for languages programs.

One of the insights from the 2021 ANGLS Conference relates to enrolment fees and funding models. Funding models for equivalent organisations in Australia vary considerably. Enrolment in most centres is largely subsidised by state or territory governments, with a contribution being required from participating families or schools. Some centres differentiate based on the stage of schooling (more for senior secondary), and some differentiate according to the student's day school sector (government/non-government). At least one centre has a higher fee for International Baccalaureate (IB) programs (some or most of the others may not offer IB).

An important consideration for ACT Government in determining a schedule of enrolment fees will be access and equity. Without government funding, it is not currently possible to address the affordability of access in a way that would make programs available to everyone who is interested. Looking at what is done interstate, it is evident that most centres have heavily subsidised enrolment fees. The level of subsidy will be a matter for government to decide if it elects to take on responsibility for CAL programs.

Operational costs

CAL receives no government funding, so enrolment fees and loans by the Convener are currently used to cover the cost of program delivery. These costs include teacher salaries, venue hire, public liability and workers' compensation insurance, teaching resources, and online services such as web hosting. The true cost of some of these is not reflected in the figures shown in the CAL financial statements that we provide to Access Canberra, because of the extensive volunteering input for some key roles, which are recompensed via honoraria, and because many of the Convener's operational costs are not reimbursed by CAL. Honoraria in no way reflect the value of the work, and this will need to change in arriving at a sustainable model for the future. Only the class teachers, the Director of School and the Director of Studies are currently recompensed through an employment award. Other leadership and administrative roles, such as those listed in previous sections of this submission, will need to be considered as professional input costs in a sustainable model for a long-term future. Some expenses that would normally be included in operational costs, such as most of the stationery costs, were funded by the convener and will have to be considered as part of an ongoing operational model for CAL. It should also be noted that the figures in the financial statements lodged with Access Canberra for the 2022 financial year are for the interval from July 2021 to June 2022. They will be superseded by another set of figures for the 2023 financial year later in 2023.

Estimates for CAL's operational expenses for the 2024 school year are shown below. These are based on conservative predictions, with one additional class projected to run, for a total of 7 classes. Allowance has been included for a CPI increase in salaries of about 3%. The middle to upper increment has been used in cases where there are periodic increments in the award. The ACT Teaching Staff Enterprise Agreement⁸ has been used in calculating approximate teacher salaries, for part-time roles as outlined at Clause E4.1 of the agreement, at 0.2 pro rata for each class taught, based on the upper end of the Experienced Teacher 1 scale. Other salary figures below are based on the ACT Education Teaching Staff Agreement, the Administrative and

⁸ https://www.education.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/1405750/ACTPS-Education-Directorate-Teaching-Staff-Enterprise-Agreement-2018-2022.pdf

Cost effectiveness

Compared to similar organisations interstate, the proposed implementation model is highly cost effective, requiring no additional funding for capital works. It makes effective use of an established school in a central location, without any impact on the day-time operations of that school. It creates benefits both to the school and to CAL in their ongoing operational contexts, as outlined in the section above relating to venue/premises. It also bears some similarity to an existing model that has been implemented in other ACT schools, where a unit is managed by a principal, as noted in the section above relating to governance. In terms of information technology support, we recommend a shared 2-day ITO 2 position, with responsibility for CAL IT matters and for IT in the wider school (equivalent to two half-days for CAL). Like many primary schools, Ainslie School does not currently have a specialist ITO position. This creates a cost-effective option to have an ITO on the site at half the cost to the school in its day-time operations. For a summary of forecast expenses in the 2024 calendar year, see Table 2 below. Full-time equivalent allocation (FTEA) in each case is a suggestion based on the projected number of classes. As a city state where a central facility is accessible for students throughout Canberra, supplementing programs already running in our day schools, the ACT should be the leading jurisdiction in Australia for languages education, with this eminently achievable option available to it.

Table 2: Projected expenses 2024 calendar year

Item	Quantity	FTEA	Rate	Amount
STAFFING COSTS				
Class teachers	7	0.2	\$ 104,000	\$ 145,560
Summer school x 2 classes x 3 weeks	2	0.02	\$ 104,000	\$ 4,160
Director of Languages	1	0.2	\$ 160,000	\$ 32,000
Administration/Reception	1	0.2	\$ 75,000	\$ 15,000
Information Technology Officer 2	1	0.2	\$ 98,000	\$ 19,600
Superannuation (10.5% of total salaries)	11.0%		\$ 216,360	\$ 23,800
Workers Compensation	1		\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000
Staffing sub-total				\$ 242,160
OTHER OPERATIONAL COSTS				
Curriculum resources	45		\$ 80	\$ 3,600
IT equipment	2		\$ 1,000	\$ 2,000
IT services	12		\$ 200	\$ 2,400
Web hosting plan renewal	1		\$ 900	\$ 900
Wireless broadband	12		\$ 100	\$ 1,200
Other sub-total				\$ 10,100
Total for calendar year				\$ 252,260

Importance of languages education

Languages in the ACT context

Language education in the ACT is important for two reasons:

1. Canberra's Position as the National Capital

Of all Australian jurisdictions, the ACT should be a leader in languages learning. As the seat of national government, Canberra has a global focus. It is home to agencies that regularly deal with international matters and international representations, including the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade; Department of Immigration and Border Protection; Department of Defence; Attorney-General's Department and the Australian Taxation Office. Embassies and other organisations such as the Delegation of the European Union

⁹ <https://www.cmtedd.act.gov.au/employment-framework/for-employees/agreements>

are also located here. Canberra also has a [diverse multicultural demographic](#)¹⁰, as confirmed again in the 2021 Census, with more than one in five households where a non-English language is spoken¹¹ and, as the centre for national aboriginal policy, also has the potential to exemplify best practices in Indigenous language revival. These are important natural advantages that ought to be a central consideration in the ACT's Future of Education discussions.

2. Benefits of Languages Education

As stated in the [Australian Curriculum: Languages rationale](#), by learning languages, students gain:

- communication skills in the language being learnt
- an intercultural capability, and an understanding of the role of language and culture in communication
- a capability for reflection on language use and language learning.¹²

Learning languages provides [cognitive, social and functional benefits](#)¹³. Mastering communication skills in another language delivers benefits that include improved thinking skills, ability to interact more effectively with speakers of the target language and broader employment opportunities.¹⁴ *Most senior secondary students in the ACT are missing out on these benefits.* Australia is not alone among anglophone countries in experiencing a shortfall in uptake and retention in language studies at senior secondary level. In the UK, additional funds were allocated recently to address this.¹⁵

The Phase 2 Implementation Plan for ACT Education's **Future of Education strategy** identifies the importance of placing students at the centre, and of ensuring that the four principles, equity, access, inclusion and agency, underpin the way we support students throughout their education journey. A centrally delivered provision for languages education after school hours, complementing languages education programs in day schools, is part of ensuring that access to language learning opportunities relevant to individual students and families are available, wherever they happen to live in the ACT.¹⁶

Languages in the Australian context

Australia is not just a sparsely populated English-speaking country in the Asian hemisphere; we are also a small population in a world where speakers of English as a first language comprise a diminishing proportion of the global population. These two facts alone underscore the need to develop and maintain capabilities of our people in languages other than English as a fundamental educational priority. Yet, we do not have a strong record in giving effect to the widely agreed need to do this. Since the 1960s, [completions to Year 12 level in languages study](#) by students have dropped from about 40% to just 12% nationally.¹⁷

As noted by Professor Jo Lo Bianco in his 2009 publication [Second Languages and Australian Schooling](#), *"Australia has an impressive record of policy development and program innovation in second language education, but a relatively poor record for consistency of application and maintenance of effort... While there appears to be public appreciation of the importance of second languages, there is less appreciation of the degree of institutional commitment, levels of funding and provider change required to achieve effective language knowledge through formal education."*¹⁸ In simple terms, we have a significant gap in capabilities, between our policy aspiration outcome and what our current education system achieves. This is to the detriment of, not just students in the ACT, but the Territory and national economies.

¹⁰ http://www.censusdata.abs.gov.au/census_services/getproduct/census/2016/quickstat/CED801#cultural ; <https://profile.id.com.au/crjo/language?WebID=200>

¹¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics, Language used at home (LANP), reference period: 2021, <https://www.abs.gov.au/census/guide-census-data/census-dictionary/2021/variables-topic/cultural-diversity/language-used-home-lanp>

¹² Australian Curriculum: Languages, <https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/languages/rationale/>

¹³ <http://cal.act.edu.au/index.htm#whylearn>

¹⁴ Why learn languages, Canberra Academy of Languages, <http://cal.act.edu.au/index.htm#whylearn>

¹⁵ Ministers put £15m towards tackling decline in language learning in England, <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2023/mar/03/ministers-put-15m-towards-tackling-decline-in-language-learning-in-england>

¹⁶ <https://www.education.act.gov.au/our-priorities/future-of-education/whats-happening-now-implementing-phase-two>

¹⁷ Rebecca Vukovic, Foreign concept: Why learning a second language is vital to our global future, Education HQ, 2016, <https://au.educationhq.com/news/33846/foreign-concept-why-learning-a-second-language-is-vital-to-our-global-future/>

¹⁸ Professor Joseph Lo Bianco, *Second Languages and Australian Schooling*, ACER, 2009, available for download at <https://research.acer.edu.au/aer/8/>; also interviewed on Radio National Breakfast, 25 October 2019 (mp3 available)

Comparison to established models in other Australian jurisdictions

ACT Government should undertake responsibility for senior secondary languages programs currently run by CAL, in a way that is similar to the practice in other jurisdictions (NSW¹⁹, Victoria²⁰, South Australia²¹, Northern Territory²² and Queensland²³) with schools of languages, languages centres and centres for distance education. The main differences in the ACT, at least initially, would be the ongoing focus on senior secondary languages education, retaining essentially the current scope of program delivery; and a transition without any capital costs in the ACT budget. Program delivery arrangements, and the venue for program delivery, would remain essentially as they are now. Outlined below are implementation plans for the proposal in the first year. For the longer term, see the next section about possible future directions.

Recommended changes to address challenge in languages education

The broader setting of the Canberra region offers both the scale and scope to form viable groups that cannot be sustained in a single locality. CAL was established to do this. It complements provisions for language learning available through schools and through other providers such as ANU's Extension program and the Australian School of Contemporary Chinese.

Ensuring succession planning and continuity of CAL programs will:

- ensure greater equity of access to languages programs in the long term for ACT students in Years 11-12
- offer economies of scale, leading to enrolment numbers that improve retention in languages education and reduce the prevalence of composite classes and enhance the quality of program delivery
- help meet ACT Government commitments, such as Priority Actions 18 and 22 in the ACT Multicultural Framework Second Action Plan²⁴, in a highly cost-effective way, building on current initiatives
- address the aspirations of a significant constituency in the Canberra community
- improve teacher recruitment and retention in languages
- provide an additional avenue for University of Canberra language student teacher placements
- promote excellence in education and benefit from the unique resources of the national capital.

Provision of a central government run facility with good access for all, complementing existing programs in schools and colleges, is important in addressing the need to build capacity in our community for global connections and multicultural inclusion.

Driving increased uptake in senior secondary languages education

By providing a central delivery option alongside existing school-based languages education programs, CAL ensures that there is an avenue for language learning that complements the work by schools. This enables students to access programs without restrictions related to where they live within the ACT. It supplements established programs that include sequences of study programs that have been set up in school districts under the language pathways concept. These school-based provisions are valuable, but it is not possible, within constraints of staffing budgets, for every school to offer a wide range of language learning choices. It is also not always viable for a program to exist in a continuing pathway beyond the high school years in some school districts, because there is generally some attrition in enrolments by the time students are transitioning to secondary college, and the numbers are no longer viable to justify the staffing cost of running a program for Years 11 and 12. CAL's programs enable a solution to these issues for families and schools, without replacing existing viable programs in schools. For the same reasons, similar models exist in Adelaide, Melbourne, Sydney, Darwin, Alice Springs, Cairns and Rockhampton.

Another vital strategy to foster uptake in languages education is recruitment and retention of skilled teachers of languages. CAL offers an additional employment avenue for teachers, which can contribute to the viability and attractiveness of language teaching as a professional pathway. It can also potentially enhance opportunities for student teacher placements by the University of Canberra, which is the main local centre for preparation of teachers in language teaching method²⁵ (as distinct from acquisition of communicative competence in languages, which is a focus of the Australian National University).

¹⁹ <https://nswschoollang.schools.nsw.gov.au/> and <https://sclanguages.schools.nsw.gov.au/>

²⁰ <https://www.vsl.vic.edu.au/>

²¹ <https://schooloflanguages.sa.edu.au/> and <https://www.openaccess.edu.au/>

²² <https://ntschoools-dedlcl.libguides.com/dlc> and <https://www.alicespringslanguagecentre.com/>

²³ <https://capricorniasde.eq.edu.au/> and <https://cairnssde.eq.edu.au/>

²⁴ https://www.communityservices.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/1362462/ACT-Multicultural-Framework-2015-2020-Second-Action-Plan-2019-2020.pdf

²⁵ <https://www.canberra.edu.au/campaign/tesol> and <https://www.canberra.edu.au/course/EDG301/1/2022>

Possible future directions for CAL

CAL Summer Schools

As part of the senior secondary focus, CAL could continue to offer a summer school in selected languages on a cost-recovery basis, similar to the Japanese Summer School²⁶ that CAL conducted in January 2022 and the 2023 Japanese and Korean Summer Schools. These summer school programs would focus on addressing gaps in the Australian Curriculum: Languages achievement standards for students whose documented exposure to language learning in high school means that they are required to enrol at “Continuing” level in their chosen language at college, but whose language proficiency is not optimal for participation at that level. The BSSS languages eligibility guidelines are an important provision to ensure valid decisions about languages course selection, but currently, there are many students whose high school language studies leave them ill-equipped to undertake senior secondary studies in languages, even though they are supposedly qualified, based on the number of years of prior instruction in languages at high school. Currently, the only practical option these students have is not to continue their language studies in Years 11-12, even though they may be interested.

EAL/D support

Another area for consideration in future years would be to offer supplementary English language support programs for students from families for whom English is an additional language or dialect (EAL/D), on a fees basis to be decided in due course by the government. These programs would not replace existing programs for EAL/D students that are currently based on needs assessments. Instead, they would offer the possibility of support for students who would benefit from this, but who do not currently qualify at the thresholds for EAL/D support in their day schools. This could be an opt-in aspect of the partnership approach described in ACT Education’s Progressing Parental Engagement School Fact Sheet.²⁷

International Baccalaureate

In most years of CAL operation so far, one or more families have raised the question of support by CAL for a student undertaking the International Baccalaureate. Until now, we have negotiated with families an arrangement where either the student’s home school or an external tutor with IB experience provides that support. In some cases, a student studies one language in IB mode with their day school and the other language with CAL. Some, but not all, interstate organisations offer IB programs. One of these is the South Australian School of Languages.²⁸ It is recommended that consideration be given to adding an IB stream to CAL programs, but not in the first year or two after handover. A major consideration will be the professional learning cost for any organisation that participates in IB. This means that it is a more practical possibility when CAL reaches a larger scale of operation. Consideration would also have to be given to the stage of schooling envisaged for IB participation – for example, the IB Diploma (senior secondary), the Middle Years Program (MYP – high school) or the Primary Years Program (PYP).

Vocational Education

Vocational Education and Training (VET) is an area in which some of the interstate organisations are active. For example, the Victorian School of Languages (VSL) is a Registered Training Organisation (RTO), through the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA). VSL is able to deliver the Certificate II in Applied Language (10297NAT) and the Certificate III in Applied Language (10661NAT)²⁹. Given that the Commonwealth Public Service is an employment pathway for many ACT students after completing their senior secondary (and for many of them, their university) studies, VET options may be of interest for future CAL planning.

Japanese for background speakers

At present, there is no school-based bilingual program or program for background speakers of a language other than English in any northside primary school or high school. Consideration could be given to including a bilingual stream or a stream for background speakers of Japanese into the offerings of Ainslie as a northside school, in a language that until now has not had any such provision. Japanese is a long-established program at the school and there is a connection to a sister school in Japan. Trade and tourism continue to thrive between Australia and Japan.

²⁶ <https://cal.act.edu.au/news.htm>

²⁷ <https://www.education.act.gov.au/?a=807433>

²⁸ For example, <https://schooloflanguages.sa.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Newsletter-Term-2-2018-2.pdf>.

²⁹ <https://www.vsl.vic.edu.au/VET/Default.aspx>, <https://www.vsl.vic.edu.au/Overview.aspx>

Strategic support for languages education in the ACT

At CAL, we regularly receive requests from schools, teachers, parents and students for information about avenues for language learning and advice on language learning resources. There are also emerging issues that affect education, including language learning, such as the impact on learning, assessment and appraisal of language proficiency of artificial intelligence (AI), as seen in the rise of online applications such as ChatGPT and DALL-E.³⁰ There is scope for CAL to continue making positive contributions in supporting language learning for the wider Canberra community, in conjunction with other organisations such as the Canberra Region Languages Forum, the ACT Bilingual Education Alliance, the ACT Community Language Schools Association, the ANU Language Teaching Forum and the Canberra Languages Network.

Conclusion

The solution to the current intractable problem in the ACT, where the lack of options impedes uptake and continuation in their language learning by students in Years 11-12, is not to mandate learning of languages in senior secondary years of schooling. Students who choose to acquire and refine skills in a second language, and who pursue that learning intention with the intention of working towards bilingualism or multilingualism and engaging with another language and culture, deserve our support. Equity is a key issue. Access should not be determined solely by where a students live or attend their day schools. If programs in the languages of their choice were accessible to them, many more students would continue their language studies. Provision of a central facility with good access for all, complementing existing programs in schools and colleges, is essential if we are to build capacity in our community for skills relevant to employment in the national capital, for global connections and for multicultural inclusion.

Frank Keighley

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³⁰ Professor Yong Zhao, Reimage Foreign Language Teaching in the Age of AI, <https://www.asiaeducation.edu.au/news-and-events/reimagine-foreign-language-teaching-in-the-age-of-ai>

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Appendices

Appendix 1: CAL Charter

Appendix 2: CAL Certificate of Incorporation

Appendix 3: CAL Certificate of Registration as Specialist Education Provider (BSSS)

Appendix 4: Letter - Extension of Registration CALC for 2023

APPENDIX 1: CAL Charter

January 2022



Purpose of the Canberra Academy of Languages

The Canberra Academy of Languages is a not-for-profit organisation, established as a specialist facility in 2016 with the purpose of expanding opportunities for language learning in the Canberra region preparing students as local and global citizens.

Rationale

The need for a specialist facility for language learning in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) is clear. Canberra as the national capital should foster engagement with the global community and should build capacity among people of the Canberra region to participate effectively in that global community. As well, as a major regional centre, the city should provide opportunities for language learning reflecting the presence of groups here, both those with connections to Indigenous languages and those with connections to languages and cultures outside Australia.

Values

We value excellence, equity and a civil society. The Canberra Academy of Languages aspires to foster and support these values for the reasons below:

1. Excellence in language learning requires scope for continuity. In the interests of continuity, it is imperative that students should have access to continued learning in their chosen languages as part of their senior secondary education.
2. Equity in language learning requires that the option to continue learning a language as part of a senior secondary education program should be available to students throughout the educational jurisdiction. The Canberra Academy of Languages advocates language learners' rights – the right to aspire to, and to be supported in achieving, proficiency in more than one language.
3. A civil society gives recognition and active support to linguistic and cultural diversity and recognises the importance of language rights, including the right of learners to aspire to, or to maintain and develop, bilingual or multilingual capabilities.

Programs

Languages and levels (such as Beginning/Continuing/Advanced senior secondary courses in languages) to be considered for inclusion in programs will be identified taking account of advice from schools, colleges and the community. Decisions on classes to run each year will be taken on the basis of four criteria:

1. The academy will provide language learning programs in selected languages for which courses have been endorsed by the responsible agency, such as the ACT Board of Senior Secondary Studies.
2. Courses will run for which there is sufficient demand to generate viable numbers that will enable the academy to meet financial commitments including teacher salaries, public liability insurance and provision of learning resources for access by students.
3. Availability of suitably qualified teachers will be taken into account in deciding programs to run from year to year.
4. Programs will complement existing provisions for language learning in the ACT.

Curriculum development

Where an area of language learning is identified as having significance for the Canberra region and as having no existing provisions, the academy may collaborate with interested stakeholders to lead or participate in the development of relevant courses for accreditation by the responsible agency.



AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

Associations Incorporation Act 1991
CERTIFICATE OF INCORPORATION

Association Number: A05776

This is to certify that pursuant to section 19 of the *Associations Incorporation Act 1991*

CANBERRA ACADEMY OF LANGUAGES INCORPORATED

is on and from 15 SEPTEMBER 2016 incorporated as an association.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Snowden', is written over the printed name.

David SNOWDEN
REGISTRAR-GENERAL

15 September 2016

Certificate



APPENDIX 3: CAL Certificate of Registration as Specialist Education Provider (ACT BSSS)



Certificate of Registration

as a
Specialist Education Provider

in accordance with the provisions of the
ACT Board of Senior Secondary Studies Act 1997

Approval is granted for the registration
of the

Canberra Academy of Languages

for a period of 5 years from
1 July 2017 to 31 December 2022
ABN 73255637048

Location:

UC Senior Secondary College, Lake Ginninderra
Belconnen ACT 2617

Note: new location: Ainslie School, Donaldson Street, Braddon 2612

Rosemary Fallett

Ms Rosemary Fallett AO, Chair
ACT Board of Senior Secondary Studies

John Stenhouse
Mr John Stenhouse, Executive Director
ACT Board of Senior Secondary Studies

Dated at Canberra this 27 day of September 2017

APPENDIX 4: Letter - Extension of Registration CALC for 2023 (ACT BSSS)



AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY
BOARD OF SENIOR SECONDARY STUDIES



Mr Frank Keighley
Principal
Canberra Academy of Languages
Canberra ACT 2601

Dear Frank
re: Extension of Registration

I am writing to let you know that the registration of the Canberra Academy of Languages in Australia will be extended for 2023.

The BSSS is currently reviewing the requirements for the registration of external education providers. This review will conclude in May of 2023.

It is envisaged that a BSSS Officer will then organise a meeting to discuss the requirements and supporting processes for the registration of external education providers.

Please contact Kristofer Feodoroff (kristofer.feodoroff@act.gov.au) if you have any questions.

I wish you well for the remainder of the year.

Yours sincerely

Martin Watson
Executive Director
ACT Board of Senior Secondary Studies

1 November 2022