



MAKING MTB-MLE POLICY SUSTAINABLE AND REALISTIC

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A transferable Australian example linked to section 3 of the Bangkok Statement

- Many countries in the Asia Pacific region have made great strides towards mother tongue based multilingual education.
- Yet only a minority of children are supported to learn in their strongest language.
- Few people question the benefits and need. The essential problem is policy design and implementation.
- I will briefly introduce the early years bilingual initiative in the state of Victoria (capital city is Melbourne) which currently supports bilingual education, immersion and second language studies in a range of languages for mother tongue maintenance and second language learning.
- The integrated and coordinated nature of policy design and implementation is a key lesson.



From sporadic to systematic provision in 5 years

Coordinated policy and community demand for much more serious bilingualism in early childhood persuaded government to fund a long term, coordinated bilingual initiative.

Preparation 2015-2017. Funding began 2018-2019. Transferred from discretionary to ongoing funding. Long term contract with universities for evaluation, teacher training, site support and parent involvement.

Pedagogy is play based innovation with streams for new learners and language maintainers



Early Childhood Language Program

General aim is for preschool aged children to learn bilingually in two forms of provision

- teaching languages for three hours of children's weekly funded-kindergarten programs, in some 140 kindergarten services.
- learning in another language for 50% of children's weekly state-funded kindergarten program, a total of 7.5 hours. Began in 10 kindergarten services, now scaling up.



Linked to Federal and other state government in a national plan for excellence in early childhood for all (inclusion, equity and participation)

The Council of Australian Governments developed the Early Years Learning Framework “*to assist educators to provide young children with opportunities to maximise their potential and develop a foundation for future success in learning*”.

Driven by a vision statement that: “*All children have the best start in life to create a better future for themselves and for the nation.*”



Languages and Programs *155 programs, 25 languages*

Arabic Auslan (Australian Sign Language) *Bangerang
Chinese (Mandarin, Cantonese) Chin Hakha French
German Modern Greek Hebrew Hindi Italian Japanese
Karen *Latji Latji * Muti Mutti *Peek Wooroong Punjabi
Spanish *Tati Tati Vietnamese *Wadi Wadi *Woi Wurrung
*Yorta Yorta

*Aboriginal languages



Funding arrangements

- \$17.9 million Australian investment from the Victorian Government, from term one 2019, funding will be available to allow around 5,000 preschool children across Victoria the chance to learn a language in addition to English.
 - The funding will allow services to deliver language programs at no additional cost to parents.
- An expression of interest process was run in August 2018. 160 services were selected to participate in the program with a waitlist of services to be included as teachers and programs are approved to meet minimum standards.



Reference

Joseph Lo Bianco, Edith Nicolas and Siobhan Hannan University of Melbourne (2019) *Bilingual Education and Second Language Acquisition in Early Childhood Education. Synthesis of Best Evidence and Action Plan*. Department of Education and Training, Victoria and University of Melbourne