New South Wales
Aboriginal Languages
Interim
Framework
K–10

‘Language is our soul.’
Auntie Rose Fernando, Gamilaroi Elder.
About the cover illustration:

a) Circles in middle represent the learning centre.

b) The parts of the bigger wavy circle represent the soul of language/learning.

c) The black curved lines small/larger represent the elders.

d) The wavy lines with the arms represent the soul reaching out from the learning centre for our people to come and learn.

e) The feet going in represent the people coming in to learn.

f) The feet going out represent the people going out with the knowledge.

g) The wavy lines going out represent the blood/river of knowledge flowing out with the people.

h) The background waves represent the vibes of soul vibrating out all over our land.

Cover Illustration © Connie Ah-See

Cover Photo: Phoebe Mumbler

Photos © Sue Lindsay

All photographs used in this publication have been used with the permission of the people in the photographs. In the event of participants passing away, some Aboriginal families/communities may be sensitive to the use of names and photographs. Please be aware of this in using this document.
# Contents

Acknowledgements 4

**Section I**
- Introduction 5
- Program Types 7
- About This Framework 9
- Key Terms 10
- Aboriginal Languages in NSW 14

**Section II**
- Developing Aboriginal Language Programs in NSW 15
- The Framework 17
- Aims 18
- Objectives 19
- Outcomes 20
- Assessment and Reporting 23

**Appendices**
- 1. Possible Student Activities 25
- 2. Contacts and Key Stakeholders for Establishing Aboriginal Language Courses 28
- 3. Glossary 30
- 4. References and Acknowledgements 32
Acknowledgements

Many people have contributed to the development of this framework. It reflects cultural advice and guidance from the Aboriginal Elders and community members listed below, plus technical advice from education officers from the major education providers in NSW.

Acknowledgement and appreciation for their effort is due to all these people and to all who implement an Aboriginal language program in NSW schools.

The NSW Aboriginal Languages Committee

Aunty Beryl Carmichael  Baakindji/Ngyampaa nations
Diat Callope  Catholic Education Commission
Nicole Claverie  NSW Department of Education and Training, Aboriginal Programs Branch
Aunty Mary Duroux  Yuin nation
Aunty Rose Fernando  Chairperson, Gamilaroi nation
Sharon Galleguillos  NSW Department of Education and Training, Aboriginal Programs Branch
Rob Healy  NSW AECG Inc
Edna McGill  NSW Parents and Citizens Association
Andrew Playford  Gilgandra High School
David Prosser  Co-chairperson, Yae格尔 nation
Albert Torrens  Bundjalung nation, NSW AECG Inc
Davina Tyrrell  NSW Teachers Federation, Yuin nation
Aunty Emily Walker  Dunghutti/Gumbayngirr nations
Charles Wilson  Baakindji/Wiradjuri nations
James Wilson-Miller  Gringai clan, Wonnaruah nation

Committee Facilitator

Pilawuk  Ngangiwumerri nation

Professional and Technical Advice: Jenny Liessmann, Graham Sims, Harry Opperman — Office of the Board of Studies NSW; Dyonne Lavelle-Nixon — Gidabal clan, Bundjalung nation, NSW DET Curriculum Unit; Pam Koeneman, Bev Smith — NSW Teachers Federation.
SECTION I

Introduction

Throughout Australia today, many Aboriginal languages continue to survive. Aboriginal languages hold and communicate the laws, knowledge, technology and survival of the world’s oldest continuous culture. In some places, however, Aboriginal languages are under threat, with only a limited number of speakers to pass on the words.

Language is one of the key aspects of Aboriginal culture. In many Aboriginal communities across Australia, the same word is used for the language, the people and the country. This indicates the intimate connection between the spoken word and the self-identification of Aboriginal Australians.

For this and other reasons, the teaching of Aboriginal languages in schools has been recognised as one way to improve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. In addition, the teaching of Aboriginal languages to non-Aboriginal students will improve cross-cultural understanding and further the process of reconciliation.

For non-Aboriginal children, the study of Aboriginal languages will signify that these languages have an equivalent status with others learned at school. It will also reinforce contemporary usage of the languages.

During the development of the Commonwealth Australian Language and Literacy Policy (DEET, 1990), Aboriginal communities throughout Australia identified the urgent need to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages.

The report of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody also emphasised the importance of Aboriginal languages. Recommendation 55 states:

That government and funding bodies reflect the importance of the national Aboriginal Language Policy in the provision of funds to Aboriginal communities and organisations. (1991, p 43)

Responding to the Commission’s recommendations and requests by NSW Aboriginal communities, the Board of Studies NSW undertook a study in 1991–1992 to determine the feasibility of teaching Aboriginal languages in NSW schools. Aboriginal communities in NSW supported the teaching of Aboriginal languages in schools, subject to Aboriginal community ownership and agreement — a principle to be followed at all times.

Accordingly, the Board of Studies endorsed the development of a framework to facilitate the teaching of Aboriginal languages in schools.
The proposal was approved by the then NSW Minister for Education. It was recognised that such an initiative could help to generate interest and research into Aboriginal languages and support efforts to revitalise them. The findings of the feasibility study have been incorporated, where possible, into this framework.

The benefits to Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students of studying an Aboriginal language will further the reconciliation process. In particular, the formal recognition of Aboriginal languages in the school classroom will develop pride and self-esteem in Aboriginal children. It will provide an incentive for them to speak their own language and tell their oral histories. This will build confidence for further learning and ensure that Aboriginal languages are maintained.

Koori children at Survival '98.
Program Types

Owing to the diversity of Aboriginal language situations throughout NSW, this framework suggests four program types on which communities may draw to develop teaching/learning programs appropriate to the language situation of their community.

Program types vary from intensive language immersion in the target language to language reclamation. The programs will include studies of languages of related nations and Aboriginal languages across Australia (see p 17).

The program types are intended as a guide only. They are adapted from Senior Secondary Assessment Board of South Australia, *Australia’s Indigenous Languages in Practice* (1996, pp 13–14).

1. First language speakers

In first language speaker programs, students are speakers of the language. These programs will extend and develop students’ language skills and may include the development of specialist skills such as interpreting and translating. They may be conducted as immersion programs.

2. Second language speakers

In second language speaker programs, students may have some background in the target language or culture, but they are probably not using the language on a day-to-day basis within the community. The language, however, is likely to be used reasonably widely. The students may be Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal.

3. Language revival

Language revival is a general term that covers the following three program sub-types:

**Language enhancement**

These programs operate where the language is still spoken by a small group of speakers within the community. Language enhancement aims to extend the use of the language into younger generations of speakers.
Program Types

**Language maintenance**

These programs apply in situations where language is no longer actively spoken ‘right through’ or in its full form, but where Aboriginal people actively identify with the language and a reasonable amount of language use remains within the community.

**Language reclamation**

These programs operate in contexts where language use is limited within the community. Language reclamation relies primarily on historical documentation and archival material.

4. **Language awareness**

These programs teach those vestiges of the language that remain and its cultural context. A language awareness program can be developed in any language, but this kind of program may be all that is possible in situations where language loss has been severe and documentation is poor. Language competence is not a goal of language awareness programs.

Language awareness programs and some language revival programs in Years 7–10 may be such that they will be placed into the Human Society and Its Environment (HSIE) Key Learning Area, as a study in Aboriginal Studies, rather than the Languages Other Than English Key Learning Area.
About This Framework

This is a generic framework. It is not a specific language syllabus. It provides guidelines for the local development of language courses involving particular Aboriginal communities and schools. Given the varied situations that exist for NSW Aboriginal languages, it is not possible to specify outcomes and content that would apply for all languages. Rather, it is intended that this framework will provide a basis for language programs to both start and grow — supported by school systems, communities and the Board of Studies. Based on the experiences of such programs, subsequent versions of this framework will include more detail about content and outcomes and more specific advice to communities and schools. The framework also includes protocols that must be followed for successful and ethical implementation.

This framework reflects the principles of relevant policies and strategies as set out in Australia’s Indigenous Languages (SSABSA, 1996); National Review of Education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People: Summary and Recommendations (DEET, 1994); Languages Other Than English K–6 Generic Syllabus Framework (Board of Studies NSW, 1996).

Since 1996, NSW students are required to study at least 100 hours of a language other than English between Years 7–10. In primary schools, languages other than English are a part of the Human Society and Its Environment (HSIE) K–6 Key Learning Area.

Schools offering Aboriginal language programs designed to meet the 100 hour language requirement for the School Certificate will need to seek endorsement of these programs through the Board’s endorsement mechanism for school courses.

The Board of Studies NSW recognises that Aboriginal languages are owned by Aboriginal people and communities and control of Aboriginal language programs must remain within Aboriginal communities.
Key Terms

Aboriginal English

Aboriginal English is a dialect of English. It is the first language, or home language, of many Aboriginal children in NSW and throughout the whole of Australia. Aboriginal English is a recognised form of communication in NSW public schools. It uses words, patterns and rhythms from both English and Australian Aboriginal languages, with each variety of Aboriginal English exhibiting the influence of one or more Aboriginal languages. (See Eades 1991, 1995).

It also includes cultural forms of expression and communication such as pause time, body language, and indirect forms of questioning. Aboriginal English cannot be taught in a Languages program in schools, as Aboriginal English is a dialect of English, not a language other than English.

Communities

Aboriginal people may belong to more than one community — where they live or work, where they come from, where their family is and so on. Some of these communities will be small, others large. Some will be in one place, some will consist of widely spread networks. Important elements of a community are country, family ties and shared experience. Community is about interrelatedness and belonging, and is central to Aboriginality.

Consultation

Consultation with Aboriginal communities means that representatives from the relevant community are involved in the planning, implementation and assessment of any and every Aboriginal language program. It is generally understood that consultation means asking Aboriginal communities their opinions and wishes, and acting to meet these.

To pursue the idea of teaching an Aboriginal language, a wide range of local Aboriginal organisations should be approached in person. To ensure that all owners and custodians are reached and consulted, the process should be ongoing and will take time.
Country/nation

Country and nation are terms meaning the area of land, river and sea that is the traditional land of each Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander language group or community. Each country has boundaries that cannot be changed, and language is tied to that country. People can learn more than one language, but it is desirable to learn the language of the country in which the school is located.

Maps of the Aboriginal languages of Australia and NSW can only be a rough guide to the choice of target language. In some cases, the maps are clearly inaccurate due to incomplete consultation with Aboriginal communities during their compilation.

Custodians and owners

Each Aboriginal language is recognised as belonging to a group of people who are its custodians. Aboriginal language program developers will need to consult, involve and inform custodians while developing the teaching of their languages. The wishes of the relevant Aboriginal communities must be sought, respected and adhered to. The ultimate authority regarding choice of target language rests with the custodians.

When implementing a program, teachers must find out whether ownership rests with the community, or individuals from that community. In most communities, the custodians and owners are the community itself. We can define custodian and owner in two ways: (1) A custodian is the keeper of the target language, whereas the owner may not be the custodian. The owner may give rights to a person to look after and teach the language, who is thus called the custodian; (2) Owners can also be the custodians, if the owners feel that there is no one else to look after the language, or when they feel that no one else can be true to the language. Not all Aboriginal communities will have identifiable owners and custodians. The best thing to do would be to consult all of your Aboriginal community through the local AECG or community organisations.

Protocols

Protocols are guidelines for all people to follow to establish and maintain positive and mutually beneficial relationships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, communities and their organisations.

Recognised Elders

Recognition as an Elder is given to those who are custodians of knowledge and lore. Elders are those people chosen and accepted by their own communities as people who have the permission to disclose cultural
Key Terms

knowledge and beliefs. Recognised Elders are highly respected people within Aboriginal communities. Proper consultation with local Aboriginal communities will direct schools to recognised Elders.

Related nations

These are Aboriginal nations that are neighbouring and/or related to that of the target nation/language.

Respect

‘Respect’ is a term used commonly in NSW Aboriginal communities. It refers to the way an individual treats others. Showing respect occurs in many ways, such as waiting to speak, not asking too many direct questions, ensuring that people are not made to feel uncomfortable or uneasy, and generally showing regard for others’ ideas, beliefs and culture.

Phoebe Mumbler and granddaughter.

THIS PHOTO HAS BEEN REMOVED FOR COPYRIGHT REASONS
Respect is related to protocol. When consulting, showing respect implies that community opinion is sought from all, or a wide range of, Elders and other community members. Respect can also be shown by earnestly listening and considering Elders’ views. A willingness to learn and an open mind when approaching an Aboriginal community will enhance communication and understanding. All of these things are important in Aboriginal culture.

**Target language**

The language of the country in which the school or community are located. In some areas of NSW, Aboriginal communities may consist of people from other language nations who have moved, or have been forced to move, into other nations by historical or economic circumstances. Choice of the target language in these areas will be determined through extensive community consultation and negotiation.
Aboriginal Languages in NSW

There are at least 70 Aboriginal language groups throughout NSW, each with a distinct language. Complex in structure and vocabulary, these languages are an important aspect of Aboriginality.

Aboriginal languages in NSW have been particularly affected by invasion and colonisation. The impact of bans on the speaking of Aboriginal languages and a general ignorance of their existence by many non-Aboriginal people has meant that the health of Aboriginal languages varies significantly across NSW.

In the past, use of Aboriginal languages was actively discouraged. In some cases people were punished for speaking their languages. Many were made to feel shame when speaking their own language. Assimilation policies, dislocation, the forced removal of Aboriginal children and the breaking up of families severed or weakened the links of cultural transmission. All of these factors have contributed to the virtual destruction of many Aboriginal languages in NSW. This history of disruption means that language development programs are a sensitive exercise. Protocols must be observed.

In the past, whole Aboriginal communities were relocated into areas that were the traditional country of other language groups. More recently, resettlement schemes and economic forces have encouraged Aboriginal people all over NSW to move to cities and regional centres. This movement from traditional country into the country of other peoples has resulted in regional centres containing Aboriginal people from a number of language groups. Each Aboriginal language country is likely to have people from another country or countries living within it.

This history means that the state of Aboriginal languages in NSW varies greatly, particularly with regard to the extent to which these languages are spoken, taught or transmitted; the cultural character of communities; and the impact of assimilation policies. In NSW, the variation is so great that no single approach will be appropriate for all situations. Wherever an Aboriginal language program is proposed, extensive efforts must be made to determine what is the right language to be taught in that country, and to identify the Elders who are custodians and owners of that language.

Aboriginal community groups should be regarded as the owners of their languages, with all of the exclusive rights that ownership bestows.
SECTION II

Developing Aboriginal Language Programs in NSW

The development of Aboriginal language programs in NSW schools stands apart from other language programs in one essential way:

*Aboriginal communities have ownership of Aboriginal languages and associated teaching programs.*

This key principle has significant implications for the development of Aboriginal language programs.

Implications

- Custodians and owners must be consulted, involved, kept informed and have the final decision over the teaching of their languages and any proposed changes to language programs. It is appropriate to consider all members of an Aboriginal community as having rights of ownership and control over their individual language.

- Meaningful consultation and negotiation requires that time and resources are used to seek out all owners, talk with owners about all issues involved, keep owners up to date with developments, and act upon owners’ advice. The time needed for this stage may be a few months to a few years. Consultation processes must take into account each Aboriginal group with an interest in the delivery of particular Aboriginal language programs.

- There is a degree of community sensitivity in NSW to the issue of teaching Aboriginal languages in schools. The process of developing an Aboriginal language program needs to be undertaken with care and sensitivity. This is why an Aboriginal language course in a NSW school requires an inclusive approach to development, teaching, resourcing and assessment. It is appropriate that an Aboriginal speaker of the target language be responsible for the delivery of each Aboriginal language program.

- Aboriginal languages are the intellectual property of Aboriginal communities. When developing resources locally, such as traditional stories or local dictionaries, copyright agreements must ensure that copyright is retained by custodians and owners. Specific contracts will need to be negotiated to ensure this.
A consequence of all language programs should be the strengthening of the target language and the understanding of linguistic diversity.

**Operational considerations**

A program management committee should be established to oversee and endorse the development of each Aboriginal language program at the school level. This committee will be the focus of an ongoing relationship between the school and the local Aboriginal communities with respect to language. The role of the committee should be to monitor, direct and provide advice on the implementation, teaching and assessment of Aboriginal language programs. The committee will have representatives from the school and the local Aboriginal communities, with the majority being Aboriginal representatives and chaired by an Aboriginal member nominated by the other Aboriginal committee members.

The classroom teacher plays a crucial and responsible role and is key to establishing a two-way teaching and learning process with the Aboriginal language teacher. Two-way learning processes are where the classroom and the Aboriginal language teacher learn from each other, complementing each other’s skills and knowledge. A partnership approach should yield the best results.

*The framework acknowledges that the classroom teacher has the ultimate responsibility and duty of care in regards to teaching, learning and assessment in their classes.*

It is anticipated that as more Aboriginal language programs are proposed or implemented in NSW schools, the NSW Board of Studies will provide resources to assist their implementation.
The Framework

This interim version of the NSW Aboriginal Languages Framework specifies aims, objectives and outcomes intended to guide the development of language programs in schools across NSW. These programs, based on a target language, will focus on more specific statements of outcomes developed in conjunction with the relevant Aboriginal communities.

Each Aboriginal language program (see pp 7–8) will have three components:

A. Study of the target language, developing skills, knowledge and understanding that will enable students to communicate in that language.

B. Study of related Aboriginal nations’ languages, which will enable students to value the similarities and differences of the neighbouring languages.

C. Study of Aboriginal languages in general, addressing historical and contemporary contexts, relationship to culture, and Aboriginal identity and spirituality.

The relative emphasis on these three elements in any one program will depend on the state of the target language, priorities of the Aboriginal community, the point of entry of the learner to the language and the stage of schooling.

In some areas, the local community, through the program management committee, may want to spend more time on the target language component (component A) to revitalise and maintain the target language. Students may then spend more time on the other Aboriginal languages components at a later stage, once the community is satisfied with the state of the language and the extent of its common use.
Aims

The study of NSW Aboriginal languages aims to develop in students:

- recognition of the importance of Australia’s Aboriginal language heritage to Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians, and the relationship of this heritage to Aboriginal identity and spirituality;

- a knowledge of specific Aboriginal languages and of those who speak, have custody over and identify with the languages;

- skills in communicating in a NSW Aboriginal language;

- appreciation of the complexity and diversity of Aboriginal languages in both contemporary and historical contexts.

Brenda ter Pelle and Connie Ah See.
## Objectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Values and Attitudes</th>
<th>Communication Skills</th>
<th>Knowledge and Understandings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Through using Aboriginal language(s) in a range of contexts, students will:</td>
<td>Students will learn to communicate in an Aboriginal language(s) by developing skills to:</td>
<td>Through using an Aboriginal language(s), students will:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• support revival, maintenance and use of Aboriginal languages</td>
<td>• use correct protocol when using Aboriginal languages</td>
<td>• understand the relationships that exist for Aboriginal people between language, spirituality, society, culture and the environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• reinforce cultural identity and self-esteem for Aboriginal students</td>
<td>• communicate with other speakers of an Aboriginal language, in oral, written and nonverbal forms</td>
<td>• understand that Aboriginal languages are complex, rule-governed communication systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• recognise and appreciate the diversity of Aboriginal languages, beliefs and attitudes</td>
<td>• use a language and understand its associated culture(s)</td>
<td>• understand and respect that certain Aboriginal language words are secret/sacred</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• appreciate the contribution of Aboriginal languages to Australian cultures and societies</td>
<td>• continue learning and researching Aboriginal languages</td>
<td>• understand the unique aspects of at least one Aboriginal language including pronunciation, grammar and syntax</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• gain personal satisfaction, achievement and confidence through increasing autonomy in an Aboriginal language</td>
<td>• develop research skills in relation to personal history.</td>
<td>• understand why many Aboriginal languages have either disappeared or are seriously threatened</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• value respect as a key to cross-cultural understanding and communication</td>
<td></td>
<td>• understand the need for correct protocol in learning and researching Aboriginal languages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• develop positive values and attitudes about language, including recognition of the cultural identity of speakers of Aboriginal languages.</td>
<td></td>
<td>• enhance their linguistic awareness through the study of more than one language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• understand that spelling in Aboriginal languages is phonetic.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Outcomes

Aboriginal language programs based on this framework will assist students to achieve the outcomes described below. The extent and range of outcomes achieved by students will depend on the point of entry of the learners to the language, the language itself, and the relative emphasis the program gives to each of the three components. Decisions taken about the extent and range of outcomes will determine whether a program is truly a language program or whether it is a language awareness program.

*Individual programs developed by schools will address more specific outcomes.*

**Target language of a country**

As a result of studying the target language of a country, students will:

- demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the language, its speakers, custodians, stories and boundaries;
- use the language to communicate with other speakers of the language in a culturally appropriate manner including oral, nonverbal and written forms of communication;
- recognise unique aspects of each target language, including pronunciation, grammar and syntax;
- recognise the role that language plays in establishing an individual’s position in Aboriginal society;
- use target language to describe kinship and relationships between Aboriginal people;
- demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the change in language use in the nation and be familiar with efforts to maintain, strengthen and/or revive the language.

**Related nations’ languages**

As a result of studying related nations’ languages, students will:

- use related nations’ languages to communicate in a culturally appropriate manner, including oral, nonverbal and written forms of communication as permitted by custodians of related nations’ languages;
- recognise unique aspects of each related nation’s language, including pronunciation, grammar and syntax;
demonstrate knowledge and understanding of relationships between the target language and Aboriginal languages beyond the target language boundaries, eg common or comparable stories;

- demonstrate awareness of the history and spirituality of languages of related Aboriginal nations;

- demonstrate a knowledge and understanding of the change in language use in related nations;

- be familiar with efforts to maintain, strengthen or revive the languages of related nations.

Aboriginal languages

As a result of studying Aboriginal languages, students will:

- demonstrate awareness and knowledge of the diversity and uniqueness of Australian Aboriginal languages;

- recognise, pronounce and identify country and words that are drawn from NSW Aboriginal languages;
Outcomes

- demonstrate knowledge of the relationship between Aboriginal languages and their associated cultures and environments and understanding of the role of language in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities;

- demonstrate understanding of the importance of Aboriginal languages to those who speak, have custody over, and identify with them, and to the nation as a whole, and of how attitudes to Aboriginal languages are changing;

- demonstrate understanding of the difference between Aboriginal languages and Aboriginal English;

- demonstrate understanding of Aboriginal English varieties as valid, viable, rule-governed language dialects of English;

- demonstrate knowledge of the state of Aboriginal languages across Australia with regard to numbers of speakers, extent of usage, word lists and relationships with other languages.

*Koori children enjoying Survival ’98.*
Assessment and Reporting

The assessment of students in Aboriginal languages should be directly related to the objectives and outcomes of this framework and of the specific language program. Assessment (formative and summative) is an integral part of the learning process.

- Formative assessment allows judgements about students’ progress to be made and to give students immediate feedback on their learning.

- Summative assessment enables the progress of each student over a period of time to be summed up, and helps to report students’ learning outcomes to parents, other teachers and the students themselves.

The assessment scheme will be determined in consultation with the school’s Aboriginal community through the program management committee.

Some of the more common assessment strategies are:

- oral presentations — based on the performance of individual students. During organised verbal presentations, it is important to emphasise pronunciation and listening skills;

- group work — based on the performance of students during interactive group activities;

- nonverbal — based upon the knowledge and awareness of nonverbal aspects of Aboriginal languages;

- student work files — based upon collected samples of the work of individual students;

- class talks — based on contributions made by individual students during class discussions;

- projects — based on the performance of individual students on set assignments.

Note that spelling of language words should not be the subject of assessment in Aboriginal language programs. Correct usage and pronunciation of the target language are far more important. Understanding rather than spelling is the key to language, as the spelling of Aboriginal languages is a complex issue. Students need a basic understanding of why words are spelt the way they are; for example, *nuurruuin* (emu), in Wiradjuri, could be spelt *nooroooin*. The ‘uu’ sound is pronounced the same as ‘oo’ in the word ‘moon’. As Aboriginal languages were not written
languages, words were spelt phonetically, as people heard them. This has resulted in a wide variety of spellings, which have not been standardised.

Teachers in Aboriginal language programs will need to develop a process of systematic observation, since achievement will rarely be demonstrated by pen and paper tasks.

Assessment of language use should be carried out in the presence of an Aboriginal speaker of the language, except in the case of programs where language fluency is not the main aim, such as language awareness programs.

Consultative processes between classroom teachers, Aboriginal language teachers, the program management committee, and the Aboriginal communities are essential to effective assessment and reporting procedures.

*Now how do I want my face painted? Koori children at Survival '98.*
Appendices

Appendix 1: Possible Student Activities

These activities may be used, adapted and expanded as appropriate by individual communities.

Activities

Demonstrating an awareness of Aboriginal languages and cultures

- Learn greetings and farewells in target language or related languages.
- Learn to sing a song in an identified Aboriginal language.
- Learn local Dreaming stories from local Aboriginal Elders, in English and target language.
- Recognise the cultural purpose of a variety of Aboriginal festivals and celebrations.
- Identify and locate Aboriginal language groups on a map of NSW.
- Investigate the origin of Aboriginal place names in the local area.

Demonstrating some appreciation of Aboriginal languages and cultures

- Engage in activities to increase appreciation of special celebrations.
- Draw or sketch familiar objects and label them in target language.
- Interact positively with others in cultural activities to develop informal relationships with Aboriginal community members.
- Use a variety of artistic mediums to express aspects of Aboriginal cultures and languages in conjunction with the local Aboriginal community.
- Create Aboriginal artefacts and crafts with Aboriginal communities and discuss appropriate technology.
- Investigate the historical context of local Aboriginal languages and how and why they have changed over time.
Possible Student Activities

**Developing knowledge and skills of Aboriginal languages and cultures**

- Regularly use appropriate cultural greetings.
- Recognise nonverbal means of communication within culturally appropriate contexts.
- Name everyday objects and activities in the target language.
- Ask for food or drink by using the correct word or phrase from the target language, and show an understanding of the meaning.
- Identify some important cultural features, eg festivals, famous people, geographical features.
- Show understanding of syntactical and grammatical structures of target or related languages.
- Investigate the origins of Aboriginal words in common use.
- Spend time with Aboriginal Elders and demonstrate respect through proper language usage.
- Investigate and record unique aspects of target language such as grammar, pronunciation and syntax.
- Recognise, record and research Aboriginal language words used in Aboriginal English.

**Experiencing a range of language and cultural activities**

- Listen to music from Aboriginal cultures and investigate the nation(s) from which it originates and/or the languages used.
- Locate, draw and label local foods in the target language or related nation’s language.
- Prepare and taste local foods and describe this experience using correct vocabulary.
- Watch videos and films about a variety of Aboriginal cultures and locate them on a map.
- Watch dancing from a variety of Aboriginal cultures and identify the language groups.
- Develop genuine relationships with Aboriginal people so as to listen to language usage in informal situations.
Participating in a range of language and cultural activities

- Join in activities, eg help to prepare specialty foods from the culture of the target language.
- Participate in activities such as dancing, singing and playing games from the culture of the target language.
- Describe the above activities using the correct terms from the target and/or related languages.
- Look at and discuss the artistic layout and composition of brochures, pictures and magazines promoting Aboriginal cultures.
Appendix 2: Contacts and Key Stakeholders for Establishing Aboriginal Language Courses

The key stakeholder is the relevant Aboriginal community. However, to identify the widest possible range of community members, the following suggested contacts may be useful.

Language groups

- Federation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Corporation of Languages (FATSIL)
- Relevant people working in languages
- NSW Aboriginal Language Committee
- Aboriginal Language Centre

Aboriginal organisations

- Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (local/regional/state)
- Aboriginal Elders Committee
- Aboriginal Land Councils (local, regional, state)
- Aboriginal Elders
- Aboriginal Medical Centres
- Aboriginal pre-schools
- Aboriginal Legal Services

School

- Parents, families, care-givers, communities
- Aboriginal Education Assistants (AEA)
- Aboriginal Community Liaison Officers
- Aboriginal Education Consultants
Contacts and Key Stakeholders

- Parents and Citizens associations
- Classroom teachers
- Homework Centres

Related organisations

- Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS)
- Aboriginal education units in universities
- Tranby Aboriginal Co-operative College
- Community colleges
- Board of Studies NSW — Aboriginal Curriculum Unit
- NSW Department of Education and Training — Aboriginal Programs Branch
- TAFE colleges
- Catholic Education Commission
- Universities
- Aboriginal Students Support Parent Awareness committees
### Appendix 3: Glossary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aboriginality</td>
<td>Aboriginality is much more than a physical manifestation of Aboriginal identity. It includes a combination of cultural heritage, spirituality and an intrinsic link with the land.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AECG</td>
<td>Aboriginal Education Consultative Group Inc. Most States have an AECG to advise on matters related to Aboriginal education and training. Some of these groups operate at State, regional and local levels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIATSIS</td>
<td>Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies. Based in Canberra, AIATSIS is involved in research, publishing, facilitating workshops and disseminating information on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies. It houses a large collection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language materials, including audio tapes and electronic archives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture</td>
<td>The accepted and traditionally patterned ways of behaving; common understanding shared by the members of a group or community. Includes land, language, ways of living and working, artistic expression, relationships and identity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Framework</td>
<td>A document such as this, which provides a template for the development of a range of diverse programs sharing a common purpose. It provides a set of aims, learning outcomes, assessment suggestions and guidelines as a basis for program development. It is not a teaching course.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous peoples</td>
<td>In Australia, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intellectual property</td>
<td>Intellectual property is ‘based on the notion that innovation is the product of the creative, intellectual and applied concepts and ideas of individuals. The state grants specific economic rights to inventive people to own, use and dispose of their creations as a reward for sharing their contributions and, further, to stimulate inventive activities.’ See Our Culture, Our Future, AIATSIS, Canberra, 1997, pp 24–25.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It is inappropriate to make distinctions between people’s ‘cultural property’ and ‘intellectual property’. The collective cultural heritage of indigenous peoples worldwide constitutes indigenous cultural and intellectual property. ‘Consent procedures may differ from group to group. Furthermore, consent is not permanent and may be revoked.’ (ibid, p 25)

Invasion

The forced takeover of land and the subjugation of its people.

Kinship

A key aspect of Aboriginal cultures and values. It includes the importance of all relationships and of being related to, and belonging to, the land.

Land

Land is a profound spiritual basis of Aboriginal heritage. ‘Land’ is widely used to include the land, sea, water and air.

Language group

An Aboriginal group identified by the use of common language (both verbal and nonverbal) and identified with a particular territory. Often used in preference to the term ‘tribe’.

Law

Aboriginal Customary Law. Each Aboriginal society has a Law that governs that society and its individuals. This Law is passed on through traditional means; orally, in artwork, dance and song and by example.

Peoples

Distinct population groups with recognisable languages and cultures. The term acknowledges the plurality and diversity of Aboriginal Australia — not one people, but hundreds of peoples.

Reconciliation

A Commonwealth initiative to promote understanding between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and the wider community. The process seeks to redress Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander disadvantage, with the target date of 2001.

Resistance

One of the responses of Aboriginal people to invasion, including violent and/or political opposition.

Rule-governed

Aboriginal communication systems have rules and conventions that must be adhered to for effective communication. These rules cover
protocol, body language, and nonverbal and verbal language.

Self-determination  People’s control over all aspects of their lives. Aboriginal self-determination is the stated policy of the Commonwealth. Self-determination must by definition involve people’s effective participation in all decisions affecting them.

Appendix 4: References and Acknowledgements


Senior Secondary Assessment Board of South Australia (SSABSA), *Australia’s Indigenous Languages in Practice*, Commonwealth Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs, Canberra, 1996.