

29 January 2019

Hon. Dan Tehan, MP
Minister for Education
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600



By email:

Dear Minister Tehan,

I am writing on behalf of the Australian Council of TESOL Associations (ACTA) to submit for your consideration and response ACTA's *National Strategy for Language in Education and Training* with a view to ascertaining whether actions in the document may be adopted as part of Government national policy for public education and training in the lead-up to the Federal election.

Attached is a copy of the document for your consideration and response.

The document has been through an extensive consultation process with ACTA members and our state and territory affiliate organisations over the last nine months, and addresses all the long-standing national policy issues that ACTA has raised in our submissions to key government reviews and reforms, in particular:

- the *Review to Achieve Educational Excellence in Australian Schools* and
- the *Inquiry into Migration Settlement Outcomes* at:
<http://www.tesol.org.au/Advocacy/Media-Room>
- the Productivity Commission's *Inquiry on the National Education Evidence Base* at:
https://www.pc.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/208903/subdr120-education-evidence.pdf;
- *Problems in the AMEP and SEE Programs* at:
http://www.tesol.org.au/files/files/591_Problems_in_the_AMEP_SEE_Program_25_May_2018_-_an_ACTA_Background_Paper.pdf.

Over the last three years, ACTA has attempted to draw government attention to the national language policy issues addressed in the *National Strategy*, especially the devolution and erosion of English as an additional Language or dialect (EAL/D) programs and the impact of the new Business Model on the AMEP and SEE programs. ACTA has written detailing our concerns to Minister Birmingham (13 June 2016, 30 August 2016, 21 November 2017), and Minister Andrews (4 July 2018, 1 August 2018).

The *National Strategy* offers a practical national policy response to outstanding language learning and teaching issues, building on and taking forward a number of worthwhile Government initiatives in the area.

Key actions in the *National Strategy* also address some concerns which have gained public attention in recent months, namely:

- the need for better infrastructure planning and provision for Australia's immigration program (Actions 1, 10, 11, 12, 13)
- the adequacy, fairness and accountability of needs-based funding for schools (Actions 4, 6, 7)
- the failure of the educational component of the Closing the Gap Strategy and the need for a new approach to its refresh (Action 8)
- the need for structured, effective education and training pathways for at risk migrant and refugee youth (Action 10)
- Australia's need to boost Asian language learning and teaching (Actions 2, 9)
- the need for effective teacher training for culturally diverse schools and TAFE (Actions 9, 13)
- Government cuts to the research funding available to universities (Action 14).

Should you have any queries while preparing your response, please don't hesitate to contact me by email (m.michell@unsw.edu.au) or phone at (h)96104870 or at (w)93851956 (Tuesdays), or at (m)0412167054.

I commend the *National Strategy* to you and look forward to receiving your considered response to our proposal.

Yours sincerely,



Michael Michell, PhD
President, Australian Council of TESOL Associations (ACTA)