Community Languages Matter!

Challenges and opportunities facing the Community Languages Program in New South Wales

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Beatriz Cardona
Greg Noble
Bruno Di Biase

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A scoping study funded by

Beatriz Cardona

Greg Noble

Bruno Di Biase

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NSW

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Contents

Acknowledgements

The Authors

Beatriz Cardona is a PhD student and researcher at the Centre for Cultural Research, University of Western Sydney, and a long-time participant in languages and migrant education.

Greg Noble is Associate Professor at the Centre for Cultural Research, College of Arts, University of Western Sydney, who has researched in the area of multicultural education and cultural diversity for twenty years.

Bruno Di Biase is Senior Lecturer in the School of Humanities and Languages, College of Arts, University of Western Sydney, who has been involved in debates around bilingualism and community languages, as a researcher and as an advocate, for over two decades.

Introduction

More than 32,000 children, every Saturday, join a Community Language School class in one of 494 locations over New South Wales, conducted by one of the 2347 language teachers in one of 44 different languages. A parallel situation occurs in all the other Australian states and territories. Yet, despite decades of research into the educational, cognitive, linguistic and cultural benefits of multilingualism (Cummins 1984; 1996; Clyne 1991, 2003; Bialystock 2007), the teaching of Community Languages in Australia is at a crossroads. Almost a decade ago Baldauf et al. (1998) had already pointed out that the wider Australian community was still not fully persuaded of their value: while surveys report general support for the learning of languages, this doesn't translate into significant mainstream status, sustainable funding, systematic coordination and administration, and adequate resourcing. The economic and social benefits of multilingualism, central to the development of a languages policy in the 1980s (Lo Bianco 1987), are no longer taken for granted.

There are two key elements that have helped produced this sense of being at a crossroads. On the one hand, an era of social and economic conservatism has increasingly shaped the management of cultural diversity. Economic rationalism and a 'user pays' ethos, for example, have increasingly permeated policies, including languages education, since the early 1990s (Di Biase, Andreoni, Andreoni & Dyson 1994, Djité 1994). While the claim that Australians have rejected multiculturalism is wildly exaggerated, there is a high degree of ambivalence about multicultural policies and programs (Ang, Brand, Noble & Wilding 2002).

On the other hand, the nature of cultural diversity has changed since the early days of multiculturalism and the community languages movement. There is increasing 'diversity within diversity' (Ang et al. 2002; Ang, Brand, Noble & Sternberg 2006) which challenges assumptions about cohesive language-based communities, let alone broader senses of ethnicity. The increasingly complex landscape of Australian society has fuelled anxieties about cultural fragmentation. The occasionally strident attacks on multicultural policies have consequences for the perception of community languages: recent demands for English language tests and teaching for migrants, for example, have mistakenly assumed that the maintenance of the home language poses problems for social cohesion and national values (*Daily Telegraph* 2006a:3; 2006b:13).

It is timely, then, to take stock of the position and functioning of community languages and to identify ways and means for their recognition in line with their growth and community needs. The aim of this project was to contribute to this process by providing a scoping study of issues drawing on interviews with teachers, students and others involved in the NSW Community Languages Schools Program. We hope it contributes to shaping the debates about languages education and the resourcing of the Program.

Languages Education: the policy context

In his message for the International Year of Languages 2008, Koïchiro Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO (2008) reminded us that

Languages are indeed essential to the identity of groups and individuals and to their peaceful coexistence. They constitute a strategic factor of progress towards sustainable development and a harmonious relationship between the global and the local context. Only if multilingualism is fully accepted can all languages find their place in our globalised world.

In their insistence that 'Languages Matter', UNESCO affirms that a commitment to promoting multilingualism is the key to cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue. Fundamental rights of expression, education, participation in cultural life, benefiting from scientific progress are crucially 'conditioned to a large extent by linguistic factors. Appropriate language policies thus provide an essential medium for exercising those rights.'

Within the Australian context, 2008 is the last year of the four-year *National Statement and Plan for Languages Education in Australian Schools*, produced by the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA). This worked as the basis for a shared commitment to action of all Australian Ministers for Education 'to the vision of quality languages education for all students, in all schools, in all parts of the country. We believe that through learning languages our students and the broader Australian community gain important benefits' (2005: 2). While affirming that 'All languages are equally valid', and hence '[l]earners gain similar social, cognitive, linguistic and cultural benefits, regardless of the language studied.' the national plan also acknowledges that 'mainstream schools alone cannot provide the entire range of languages that learners may wish to study' and recognises 'after hours ethnic/community languages schools' among the providers of language education (2005: 7).

The MCEETYA document also confirms that 'Languages Other than English' are one of the eight key learning areas in the National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-First Century and yet at the same time it acknowledges that the bulk of languages students in Australian schools (over 90%) receive instruction in one of only six languages: Japanese, Italian, Indonesian, French, German and Chinese.

In light of the fact that the mainstream school system and the universities are not in a position to provide education but for a handful of languages, the role of the after hours Community Languages schools assumes greater importance in their contribution to meeting national (and international) policy goals. Their role as providers of language education services needs to be recognised further both in national and state policies and contexts.

The newly elected Australian federal government has promised an 'Education revolution' and also greater attention to provision of the technological support necessary to this undertaking. MCEETYA's current plan expires this year and the Ministers of Education will then have an opportunity to evaluate results and construct a new plan within a revitalised national context which reviews funding to states for languages and makes available a greater share of resources for languages education. New South Wales, which has no current policy on languages but is acting within the national plan, will have an opportunity to formulate a policy that encompasses Community Languages schools, further recognises their role as language education providers and indicates ways and means of articulating with mainstream schools while ensuring availability of the necessary resources for professional development, quality of delivery, and consider broadening of the range of languages covered by after hours provision.

The social context

Within this broader context, immigration to Australia continues at the rate of over 140,000 new settlers per year, including refugees. Table 1 illustrates the 2006-7 financial year, with close to two thirds (over 62.3%) of new settlers arriving from non English-speaking countries. This intake of more than 87,000 people adds close to 0.5% to the annual Australian population growth, with mainland China, India, Arabic-speaking countries and Vietnam representing the main sources over the last years. Few of the languages spoken by the range of new settlers are represented in the formal education system but many of them are represented in the Community Languages school system.

Table 1: Top 20 Non-English-Speaking Countries Contributing to Settler Arrivals 2006-2007

Country of Birth	Total Migration and Humanitarian
India	13496
China (excludes SARs and Taiwan)	12009
Philippines	5561
South Africa	3996
Viet Nam	3135
Malaysia	2899
Sri Lanka	2721
Sudan	2513
Iraq	2213
Afghanistan	2186
Korea	2092
Thailand	1989
Indonesia	1704
Singapore	1658
Burma (Myanmar)	1629
Fiji	1492
Pakistan	1446
Lebanon	1390
Iran	1077
Hong Kong (SAR of China)	995
Total	66201
All other NESB countries (approx.)	21148
Total NESB countries (approx.)	87349
English Speaking Countries (approx.)	52799
Total Arrivals	**140148**

Source: Dept. of Immigration and Citizenship 2007

Over the last decade NSW received the greatest share of new settlers. Table 2 reports 2006 Census figures showing that the number of speakers of a language other than English at home has increased in all capital cities, with the highest growth registered for Sydney where the speakers of languages other than English has increased to nearly 30%.

Table 2: Language Other Than English Spoken at Home, Capital Cities, 1996-2006

	1996	2006	Change
	%	%	'000
Sydney	26.4	29.3	223.1
Melbourne	25.7	26.3	133.7
Brisbane	9.2	10.7	53.9
Adelaide	14.9	15.2	11.8
Perth	13.5	13.9	33
Hobart	4.9	5.1	0.9
Darwin	15.7	12.5	0.9
Canberra	13.7	14.6	6.3

Source: 1996 Census & 2006 Census (ABS 2007)

Strikingly, about 250 languages have been reported to be spoken in Australian homes by over 20% of the population at the 2006 Census. This is an unprecedented number of languages being spontaneously reported by Census respondents, which may indicate a higher level of linguistic consciousness in the population. The fastest increasing languages over the 1996-2006 decade, in percentage terms, are Mandarin and Hindi, both of which more than doubled their size, followed by Korean (close to double), Arabic and Vietnamese, with more than one third increase, followed by Cantonese and Turkish as shown in Table 3. Some language groups decreased as an effect of ageing of the population in older communities such as the German and Italian, which show, however, an increase in terms of the number of people declaring their (second, third generation) German or Italian 'ancestry'.

Table 3: Top 15 Languages Spoken at Home, Australia, 1996-2006

Language	1996	2006	Growth (1996-2006)
	'000	'000	%
English	14 564.9	15 581.3	7.0
Italian	375.8	316.9	-15.7
Greek	269.8	244.6	20.8
Cantonese	202.5	244.6	20.8
Arabic	177.6	243.7	37.2
Mandarin	92.4	220.6	138.9
Vietnamese	146.3	194.9	33.2
Spanish	91.3	98.0	7.4
German	98.8	75.6	-23.5
Hindi	34.0	70.0	106.0
Macedonian	71.3	67.8	-4.9
Croatian	69.2	63.6	-8.0
Korean	29.9	54.6	82.6
Turkish	46.2	53.9	16.6
Polish	62.8	53.4	-14.9

Source: 1996 Census & 2006 Census (ABS 2007)

Yet, despite this widespread use of languages, Australian multilingualism is intergenerationally unstable: a number of studies show that the shift to the exclusive use of English in the second and subsequent generations is high and increasing (Lo Bianco 2003). A very cursory look at the statistics would allow a similar conclusion to be reached. Table 4 attempts a very rough calculation of language maintenance across a number of older and newer language communities.

Table 4: Language Maintenance Estimates in Selected Ancestry/Language Groups

	Ancestry	Speak language at home	Language maintenance % Australia	Language maintenance % NSW
German	811,540	75,625	9.3	11.2
Dutch	310,089	36,179	11.7	12.0
Polish	163,802	53,383	32.6	33.2
Italian	852,418	316,894	37.2	37.8
Sinhala	73,856	29,059	39.3	31.6
Serbian	95,365	52,538	55.1	62.3
Filipino*	160,374	92,338	57.6	62.9
Greek	365,147	252,216	69.1	70.1
Turkish	59,393	53,863	90.7	90.3
Vietnamese#	173,658	194,863	112.2	113.2
*includes Filipino and Tagalog				
# Many Vietnamese declare 'Chinese' ancestry				

This shows both the decrease in language use in the older communities, with estimates as low as under 10% for German (that is, less than 10% of the population declaring German ancestry still use the language at home) and the linguistic vitality of newer communities, peaking with Turkish at over 90%. The same calculation for New South Wales is generally close to Australia-wide averages for language use at home, or higher, e.g., Serbian and Filipino maintain their languages better in NSW than elsewhere, while some other communities e.g., the Sinhalese, show a lower percentage of language use in NSW than the national average.
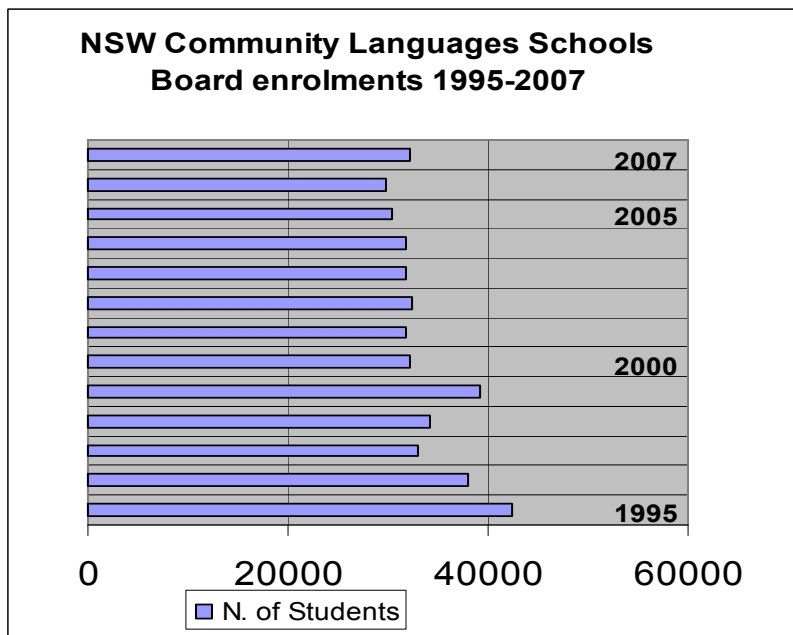
The extent and richness of Australian multilingualism stands in stark contrast to the alarm raised by leading educational institutions in a recent 'languages in crisis' document according to which 'Australia's school students spend the least time on second languages of students in all OECD countries' with currently fewer than 15% of year 12 students studying a second language (Lindsey 2007). According to the same document the last decade has also witnessed a dramatic collapse in the number of languages in Australian universities from 66 in 1997 to 29 languages in 2007. The authors' own university was unable to support all the nine languages other than English on offer and shed four of them over the last four years: Indonesian, French, German and Vietnamese. This suggests the need for stronger encouragement for young people to study languages.

Pitched against the lively canvas depicted in Tables 1-4, this rather bleak dimension of the Australian educational context seems to demonstrate that official educational institutions are not in a position to cater for the range of language education needs presented by language-based communities, a fact which strengthens the rationale for the communities themselves to attempt to fill the cultural and linguistic gap left wide open by this institutional vacuum. It also supports the positive attitudes and recommendations relating to 'complementary' languages education of the *National Statement and Plan* (MCEETYA 2005).

Yet, the role and position of Community Languages schools remains ambiguous and vulnerable: on the one hand, there is a clear educational rationale and institutional confirmation of their place (NSW Community Languages Schools Program 2006; MCEETYA 2005); on the other, financial support for these services is not always adequate, public acknowledgement of their worth is rare and their relationship with other educational programs is unclear. On the face of their role as providers of educational services Community Languages schools have long experienced problems with funding – both in terms of the amount and in terms of the reliability of continuous provision – and with their status in relation to mainstream educational provision of languages other than English and the broader curriculum (Kalantzis, Cope, Noble & Poynting 1990; Noble & Poynting 2000). One clear indicator is the stagnating curve presented

by enrolments in Community Languages schools supported by the NSW Board over the last decade or so. Compared with 1995 as a base year, when the state and territory governments take on the role of managing and distributing the Australian government's per capita grants for these schools, there is a net drop of 24%. This also coincided with the advent of a Liberal federal government, which seemed less supportive of the overall ethos of the program. The student curve remains significantly flat over the ensuing 12-year period in contrast to the growth of non-English speaking new settlers, particularly in New South Wales.

Table 5: NSW Community Languages Schools Enrolments

The Community Languages Schools Program, despite these problems, continues to represent a significant educational service, complementing the mainstream educational systems which can only afford a very limited offer of languages and opportunities in languages education. In NSW, the complementary system supported by the Community Languages Schools Board covers a respectable number of students (32,249) and 46 languages, as Table 6 shows. Chinese languages and Arabic account for nearly half of the students while three other languages – Vietnamese, Greek and Korean, in that order – cover a further quarter of the Community Languages schools student population. But the truly unique function of these schools can be seen particularly in the fact that they are able to cover very small and/or newer community languages – including, for instance, Samoan, Dinca (one of the languages of Sudan) or Mandaean (a minority from Iraq), spoken among recently arrived refugees. Apart from offering an educational experience that is subject to quality assurance processes (Community Languages Australia 2006) and providing (limited) funds for curriculum and professional development, the

Board focuses on community participation and cultural maintenance and access to government school premises for community organisations.

Table 6: Community Languages Schools Supported by the NSW Community Languages Schools Board by Number of Students, Locations and Teachers

(45) Languages	Students	Locations	Teachers	Languages	Students	Locations	Teachers
Arabic	6577	56	325	Latvian	17	1	2
Armenian	267	4	36	Macedonian	91	4	7
Assyrian	265	4	37	Malay	8	1	4
Bengali	186	8	25	Maltese	6	3	3
Bosnian	180	5	9	Mandaean	179	1	5
Chinese (Cantonese)	3322	24	281	Persian	256	9	36
Chinese (Mandarin)	5625	68	422	Polish	213	8	28
Croatian	123	4	8	Portuguese	215	9	11
Dari	480	12	48	Punjabi	146	5	16
Dinka	11	1	7	Russian	282	7	53
Filipino	12	1	1	Samoan	59	1	8
Finnish	16	1	3	Sanskrit	16	1	2
German	91	5	8	Serbian	339	7	10
Greek	2846	87	113	Sinhala	180	3	22
Hebrew	125	6	8	Spanish	161	7	12
Hindi	393	5	44	Swedish	134	9	11
Hungarian	43	1	3	Tamil	811	11	83
Indonesian	232	2	6	Telugu	16	2	2
Italian	752	21	34	Thai	94	2	10
Japanese	605	7	55	Turkish	594	12	38
Khmer	167	2	15	Ukrainian	72	3	21
Korean	1658	18	144	Vietnamese	4317	44	321
Lao	67	1	6	**Total**	**32249**	**493**	**2343**

The important role of such programs in developing cultural identities, especially through the maintenance and extension of the home language, is well established (Jones Diaz 2003). Such services have a strong justification in terms of educational and linguistic benefit for individuals – which have consequences for a public commitment to the social justice principles of equity and access – but they also have broader educational and economic advantages for Australian society as a whole (Kalantzis, Cope & Slade 1989; MCEETYA 2005). Indeed, they are central to forms of 'ethnic community capital' – the infrastructure of social and cultural resources and relations that sustains ethnic communities (Lalich 2003). The relationship to mainstream social organisations, including 'official' educational contexts, and the links between diverse linguistic and cultural communities, is less clear. But the role of Community Languages schools in achieving one important educational goal is indisputable: that of attempting to make the study of languages and cultures a 'normal part of the educational experience of all Australians', as Djitè (1994: 139) puts it, synthesising many calls to that effect from the 1980s and 1990s (e.g.

Lo Bianco 1987; Smith et al. 1993; Di Biase et al. 1994). This objective resonates, in the new century, in the *National Statement and Plan* and its commitment to quality languages education for all students because of the 'important benefits' that accrue to students and the broader Australian community (MCEETYA 2005).

What are Community Languages schools?

Community Languages schools are after-hours language schools that provide mother tongue language teaching and cultural maintenance programs (Community Languages Australia 2006). There are currently 47 languages being offered at Community Languages schools to more than 32,000 students, aged 5 to 16, enrolled in 454 schools in NSW. This figure refers to Board-funded Community Languages schools and takes no account of a number of schools that operate outside the scope of the Board either by choice or because they may not meet requirements for registration. Another important reason for believing that the said figure is an underestimate is that since 2005 pre-school age children are no longer counted or funded even though communities do cater for pre-schoolers. These schools have tended to be primarily community-based, non-profit-making schools established by communities whose first language is not English (NSW Community Languages Schools Program 2006). Community Languages schools operate after school hours on week days or on Saturdays and most of them conduct their classes at local primary schools in the area. Some Community Languages schools, however, have an infrastructure that derives from larger activities and services provided by their community organisations.

Although Community Languages schools are overseen by the NSW Department of Education and Training (DET), they are distinct from both the Community Languages Program within mainstream schooling and the Saturday School of Community Languages. Saturday schools are run by the DET and cater for high school students wishing to study a language they speak at home, if a course in that language is not offered at their own school or college. This program is fully funded by the NSW Department of Education and Training and follows Board of Studies syllabuses in 24 languages. These languages are assessable as part of the School Certificate and Higher School Certificate.

Community languages schools, in contrast, are recognised as complementary to mainstream school languages programs and are funded by Australian Government grants through the Community Languages Schools Program (CLSP). In New South Wales, these funds are administered by the NSW Community Languages School Board which was established in 1992 to advise the Minister for Education and Training on policy concerning Community Languages schools and the distribution of funds for Community Languages schools. In addition it supports schools through professional development programs for teachers, facilitates free access to government school premises and organises a yearly event for all the Community Languages schools in which the Minister awards meritorious languages students. The Board advises the Minister on any major policy changes recommended for the Program (DET 2007).

A brief history of Community Languages schools

Previously known as Ethnic Languages schools, Community Languages schools have long been part of the mosaic of Languages other than English (LOTE) education provision in Australia. Major community languages in Australia in the nineteenth century were German, Chinese, Scottish, Irish, French, Italian, Danish and Welsh (Clyne & Kipp 2006). Italian speakers were the largest single group to arrive to Australia post war, and for several decades they were the largest non-English speaking group (currently Chinese speakers are the largest non-English speaking group according to the 2006 Census). Large-scale migration of Greeks in the late 1950s made them the second largest non-English speaking group nationally. The Greeks were followed by Turks, and various groups from Yugoslavia, Lebanon and other Arabic-speaking countries. With the election of a new Labor government and the adoption of a non-racial immigrant selection policy in the early 1970s, many Asian immigrants and refugees started arriving. The new government also introduced a number of policies aimed at promoting multiculturalism and multilingualism.

Whitlam's Immigration Minister, Al Grassby, championed the view that migrant children who did not speak English could benefit from instruction in their mother tongue and that language study, far from being a problem, could broaden the horizons of all individuals. Grassby established a Migrant Task Force in each state to look at settlement problems and examine post arrival services. These Migrant Task Forces made a number of recommendations in 1973 and 1974 in the area of education and language services including that 'opportunities should be available for all children – Australian born as well as overseas born – to learn languages other than English' (Djité 1994). The Task force also recommended that steps should be taken to integrate ethnic schools into the education system, and to support the language maintenance function of these schools. Soon after these recommendations, initiation of a study into migrant languages in the school system was announced.

The Committee on the Teaching of Migrant Languages in Schools found in 1975 that although 15% of all Australian primary school children came from bilingual homes where at least one parent had a mother tongue other than English or an Aboriginal language, only 1.4 % was studying their native language at school. They found that this neglect was 'detrimental to the child's education and is an irrevocable loss to the developing multicultural society'. The Committee urged closer cooperation between ethnic schools and day primary schools to promote the study of the migrant languages and cultures.

The Australian Institute of Multicultural Affairs was established in 1979 and one of its most important initiatives was the establishment of federal government support for ethnic schools. The institute also conducted in 1979 *The Review of Multicultural and Migrant Education,* chaired by lawyer Frank Galbally, which commented on the fundamental role of education in the development of multiculturalism. The report stressed that education in Australia should embrace the teaching of English as a second language, the teaching of community languages and studies of ethnic and cultural diversity in Australia. The Federation of Ethnic Community Councils of Australia (FECCA), the Linguistics Society of Australia (LSA), the Applied Linguistics Association of Australia (ALAA) and the Australian federation of Modern languages teachers' Association (AFMLTA) through their journal *Babel* led the call for a policy which would explicitly set out a rationale for second language education.

Community languages were one of the first language areas to receive earmarked Commonwealth funding. The Commonwealth-run Ethnic Schools Program (ESP) commenced in 1981 to supplement community efforts to teach the more than 60 LOTEs spoken within Australian society. The primary objective of the ESP was to maintain the relevant languages and cultures of students from non-English speaking backgrounds while the secondary aim was to increase awareness and understanding of all students of the different community languages and cultures (Baldauf 2005).

By 1986 the Ethnic School Program's success led to a budget cap being put on Commonwealth funding because of concerns about the rapid growth in students numbers attracting large per capita funding commitments. Reviews of the programs also expressed concerns about the perceived educational weaknesses: the lack of a formal curriculum, inappropriate teaching materials, inappropriate formal teacher qualifications and lack of accredited courses (Baldauf et al. 1998). To address these problems the 1991 *Australia's Language: The Australian Language and Literacy Policy* recommended that the ESP program be more closely aligned with mainstream language programs (Baldauf 2005:138).

In 1992 the Ethnic Schools Program was replaced by the Community Languages Element (CLE) of the Schools Language Program and responsibility for its management went to the states. This transfer of responsibility and the mainstreaming of community languages was a strategy to reduce the costs of these schools by offering greater administrative and professional support, use of equipment and lower rentals costs. At much the same time, the terminology of 'community languages' was increasingly adopted because the term 'ethnic' was felt by some to be a pejorative term, as evidenced in community consultations conducted by the NSW program in the mid 1990s (Post 2008). In fact, it had been argued already in 1982, in one of the first

studies of ethnic schools in Australia, conducted by Norst, that the term 'ethnic' had acquired connotations of ''non-Australian' and that, by replacing the name with 'community languages', attitudes towards the program could be shifted in mainstream Australian society (Di Biase and Dyson 1988).

Despite these changes, the financial situation of schools remained the same throughout the decade. In fact, since 1992, when the per capita funding rose from $35 to $60, there has been no increase in per capita funding, except to keep pace with inflation, despite the increases in the costs of running educational services. Some state governments, such as those in South Australia and Victoria, but not NSW, have supplemented per capita funding to Community Languages schools up to $120. But for sixteen years there has been no funding increase for Community Languages schools by the Australian federal government. This has meant that it has been difficult for the states to manage any growth in demand and to support programs in independent schools, which were not party to the original funding arrangements, or to cater for the needs of new languages (Dinka) without reducing funding to the languages already supported (Baldauf 2005). States have thus implemented their own CLSP and provide varying amounts of support and funding.

In NSW, the Community Languages Schools Board (CLSB) and the Community Languages Section of the NSW Department of Education and Training (DET) are responsible for the Community Languages Program. The CLSB monitors the allocation of grants administered by DET to incorporated associations that operate schools outside mainstream school hours for Kindergarten to Year 12 students. In 2007 the Community Languages Program distributed $2.4 million of Australian government funds to teach over 32000 students in 493 schools involving 2343 teachers teaching a total of 45 languages.

Table 7 below offers a comparative flash of the totality of schools by language and number of students in 1995, that is, soon after the Board became responsible for the distribution of national government funds for after hours community-run language schools, and 2007 figures.

Table 7: NSW Community Languages Schools (Board-supported) Enrolments 1995, 2007

Languages	No. of Students 1995	No. of Students 2007	%Variation	Languages	No. of Students 1995	No. of Students 2007	%Variation
Arabic	10506	6577	-37.4	Lao	271	67	-75.3
Armenian	467	267	-42.8	Latvian	53	17	-67.9
Assyrian	500	265	-47.0	Macedonian	933	91	-90.2
Bengali	161	186	15.5	Malay	99	8	-91.9
Bosnian	152	180	18.4	Maltese	0	6	new
Bulgarian	31	0	-100.0	Mandaean	0	179	new
Burmese	20	0	-100.0	Maori	19	0	-100.0
Chinese/ Cantonese	2278	3322	45.8	Nepali	23	0	-100.0
Chinese/ Mandarin	8916	5625	-36.9	Persian	688	256	-62.8
Coptic	6	0	-100.0	Polish	482	213	-55.8
Croatian	299	123	-58.9	Portuguese	500	215	-57.0
Dari	172	480	179.1	Punjabi	183	146	-20.2
Dinka	N/A	11	new	Russian	280	282	0.7
Filipino	130	12	-90.8	Samoan	0	59	new
Finnish	21	16	-23.8	Sanskrit	0	16	new
German	284	91	-68.0	Serbian	443	339	-23.5
Ghanaian	31	0	-100.0	Sinhala	275	180	-34.5
Greek	3738	2846	-23.9	Spanish	420	161	-61.7
Gujarati	73	0	-100.0	Swedish	62	134	116.1
Hebrew	759	125	-83.5	Tamil	524	811	54.8
Hindi	201	393	95.5	Telugu	22	16	-27.3
Hungarian	77	43	-44.2	Thai	158	94	-40.5
Indonesian	0	232	new	Tongan	26	0	-100.0
Italian	961	752	-21.7	Turkish	1880	594	-68.4
Japanese	136	605	344.9	Ukrainian	140	72	-48.6
Khmer	284	167	-41.2	Urdu	21	0	-100.0
Korean	1409	1658	17.7	Vietnamese	3273	4317	31.9
Kurdish	35	0	-100.0	**Total**	**42422**	**32249**	**-24.0**

Comparing the Community Languages schools operations in NSW between at the edges of the last decade reveals some surprising developments. The greatest surprise is the lack of growth in spite of the increasing population speaking a language other than English at home and the greater intake of new settlers in this state. Over the decade 10 languages have ceased operations or have decided to operate without the Board's purview. The great majority of the remaining languages (28 of them) experienced a considerable decline in enrolments ranging between 20 and 91 percent. On the positive side, over the same period six new languages were introduced, reflecting emerging communities, and 11 other languages experienced an increase in enrolments. Particularly noteworthy is the more than threefold increase in the number of Japanese enrolments. This is certainly not the fastest growing community but the increase probably reflects, at least in part, a demand coming from the wider community.

Beside having obtained, and policing, the waiving of fees for the use of public school premises, the main achievement of the CLSP in NSW in the last few years, according to Baldauf (2005), is the provision of training for Community Languages school teachers through university providers. Since the 1990s training has been made available to hundreds of teachers in areas such as communicative methodology, outcome based syllabuses, programming and assessment. This training provides a pathway for teachers into higher education, but course fees restrict students' participation (Baldauf 2005:14). The two main issues affecting the Community Languages Program in NSW identified by Baldauf are the status of these services in relation to mainstream schools and teacher preparation.

The issue of teacher preparation concerns both the requirements needed to become a primary school teacher, which most community languages teachers don't have, and the registration (certification) process which is time consuming and expensive. Such a registration system, argues Baldauf (2005:142), 'ghettoises' community languages and 'lowers teacher's self-esteem, suggesting that they are not real teachers regardless of their skills and qualifications'. He argues that if Community Languages schools were defined as schools they could take on a bigger role in the provision of languages of lesser demand and there would be better liaison with government schools, advantaging teachers, students and curriculum. However, changing the status of community languages services would raise issues such as standards and assessment in Community Languages schools, and industrial issues such as the job status of current language teachers in the system.

A 2002 review of the Commonwealth Languages Other Than English Programme (Erebus 2002) identified the following challenges facing ethnic schools across Australia:

- Inadequate per capita funding over the last 5-7 years in some states and territories
- Under-funded professional development, training and materials development opportunities
- Lack of strategic planning and commitment in some jurisdictions
- Lack of consistent message in relation to policy considerations at Commonwealth, state and territory levels
- Lack of information on funding formulae and processes by which ethnic schools are apportioned funding in some jurisdictions.

The report also identified some of the strengths of the Community Languages schools including the strong input by communities and volunteers and recommended further input by Commonwealth and jurisdictions in the promotion awareness of the community to the benefits of bilingualism and biculturalism. It also recognised its crucial role in incorporating language

instruction with cultural experience providing a strong base for language and cultural acquisition and maintenance.

The report highlighted the importance of making LOTE curriculum relevant for children in Australia through appropriate professional development for teachers and contemporary resources for Australian students. It also recommended seeing input from students on best practices they have experienced might provide a clue into what is required to maintain their interest and making the learning process more relevant to everyday life experiences.

The Commonwealth Review (Erebus 2002) also addresses the issue of teacher quality in Community Languages schools and makes recommendations for further incentives for professional development for Community Languages school teachers and more opportunities for them to work with mainstream qualified teachers. The report recommends that the Commonwealth takes a leading role in addressing these issues and providing funding for national professional and materials development to ensure better coordination and rationalisation of resources for more effective outcomes.

In response to this 2002 Commonwealth Review and the 2003 Review of Students Learning of Languages other than English in Australian Schools, MCEETYA endorsed the development of a national statement on the purpose and nature of languages education, and a national plan for the period 2005-2008. The *National Statement and Plan*, endorsed by federal and state ministers and distributed to schools in 2005 provides a conceptual basis and reference point for curriculum decision-making in educational sectors and schools (Tedesco 2006). It is divided into three sections: Purpose and nature of languages education, national developments and implications for jurisdictions and schools.

The statements presented in the first section seek to highlight the educational, intellectual, cultural and economic benefits of language education. National developments outlines the historical context of language education and the current challenge of achieving further integration of language education into mainstream curriculum and into program delivery. The third section, Implications for jurisdictions and schools provides advice as to the factors that need to be considered in the choice of languages, the role of Community Languages schools as pivotal in the promotion and teaching of languages and the need to strengthen their role through quality assurance processes.

The issue of quality assurance for Community Languages schools is a current project, coordinated by Community Languages Australia (CLA). The 'Improving the National

Coordination and Quality Assurance of Ethnic Schools Project', funded under the national projects element of the Australian Government's School Languages Programme (SLP), aimed to support the implementation of the MCEETYA *National Statement and Plan*. In its progress report CLA indicated positive outcomes in the areas of 'national coordination in delivering outcomes in the broad areas of quality assurance, national cooperation and professional learning' (CLA 2007:17).

CLA has also released a *Statement on Community Languages Schools* (CLA 2007) articulating the role of Community Languages schools, the need for national coordination and how schools will contribute to delivering the *National Statement and Plan for Languages Education in Australian Schools 2005–2008* (CLA 2007).

CLA has, in addition to the Statement, developed an *Operational and Administrative Procedures Manual for Community Languages Schools* funded by the Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST). The Manual is aimed at Community Languages schools to provide them with a guide to 'ensuring operational and administrative procedures are addressed in languages schools in a manner consistent with national and state legislative requirements' (CLA (c) 2007: 5).

The implementation of the Quality Assurance Framework will play a crucial role in the future of Community Languages schools and will impact on issues related to funding, recognition and accreditation as well as assessment and curriculum development and implementation. The manner in which this Framework will be implemented, including the strategies to engage and support Community Languages schools through this new process and the resources and support devoted by the government to enhance the capacities of schools, will be vital in ensuring it does not disadvantage any school unfamiliar with such protocols.

The study

The intention of this scoping study was to map the central issues, challenges and themes that stakeholders identify in comprehending the Community Languages Program. It involved interviews with key stakeholders drawn from the NSW Community Languages School Board, the Department of Education and Training and other educational facilities, and with staff, students and their parents from a small sample of Community Languages schools. The case studies are not meant to be statistically representative, but allow an examination of these issues in relation to specific sites and how they impact on the educational and cultural experiences of young people.

The key research issues centre around a number of questions to do with language and cultural identity, the social functions of Community Languages schools, their economic viability, issues of institutional support and recognition, relations with mainstream education, the quality of curriculum and pedagogy, the Community Languages schools' relations with their linguistic communities, questions of cultural maintenance, social cohesion and integration into wider Australian society.

The central research questions were originally posed as these:

- how economically viable are Community Languages schools under current funding arrangements?
- how substantial is institutional support of the Community Languages Program?
- does the program provide recognised quality of curricula and pedagogy?
- what are the relations between the Community Languages schools and mainstream schooling?
- what are the relations between the Community Languages schools and the communities they serve?
- what are the schools' contributions to cultural maintenance and community cohesion, and how well do they cope with the increasing hybridity of cultural identities?
- do they foster productive pathways for young people, including skills in cultural translation and transformation?
- what is the contribution of home language development and Community Languages schools to the development of the forms of cultural and social capital necessary to successful participation or young people in both their immediate communities and wider Australian society?

A total of 26 interviews were conducted using specific and open-ended questions to encourage participants to dwell on the issues most relevant to them. Interviews were conducted with both with primary players such as Community Language school coordinators, parents, teachers and students as well as key stakeholders such as DET CLSP administrators, regional program coordinators, CLS Board members, language schools' principals and mainstream school principals.

The schools

Community Languages schools are diverse not only in terms of the languages being taught but the resources – the human, cultural and social capital – available. Well established migrant communities like those of Italian, Greek and Ukrainian backgrounds have a long history of community building activities within their own communities including the establishment of cultural and religious centres, business enterprises and language education programs. Some of these communities have their own physical infrastructure where the activities, including the Community Languages school, are run. Other Community Languages schools utilise public and private school grounds to run their programs, a few of them paying some fees to the school for the use of the premises. The Community Languages schools supported by the Board, and they are the majority, do not pay fees for the use of public schools. The level and capacity of involvement from the community in the setting and maintenance of the Community Languages schools also varies with some communities able to invest more heavily than others in the program through voluntary work, supervision and fund-raising activities.
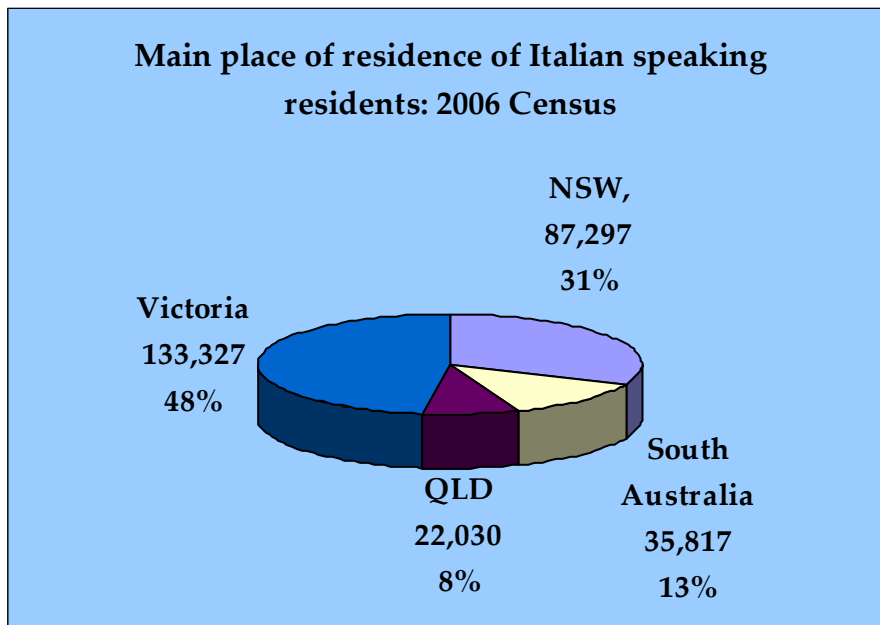
For the purpose of this scoping study, interviews were conducted in four Community Languages schools teaching Arabic, Chinese (Mandarin), Italian and Spanish. The choice of languages reflected current Census statistics identifying these languages as on the top ten community languages spoken in Australia (Table 3) and in NSW (Table 7).

The schools chosen for our scoping study varied in size, length of existence and structural arrangements in order to give a sense of the richness of experiences and models of management in place. The four schools in this study are currently participating in the Community Languages Program managed by The NSW Department of Education and Training. As mentioned above, in 1992 the Ethnic Schools Program was replaced by the Community Languages Element of the Schools Language Program and responsibility for its management went to the states. The Community Language School Board monitors the allocation of grants administered by DET to the Community Language Schools.
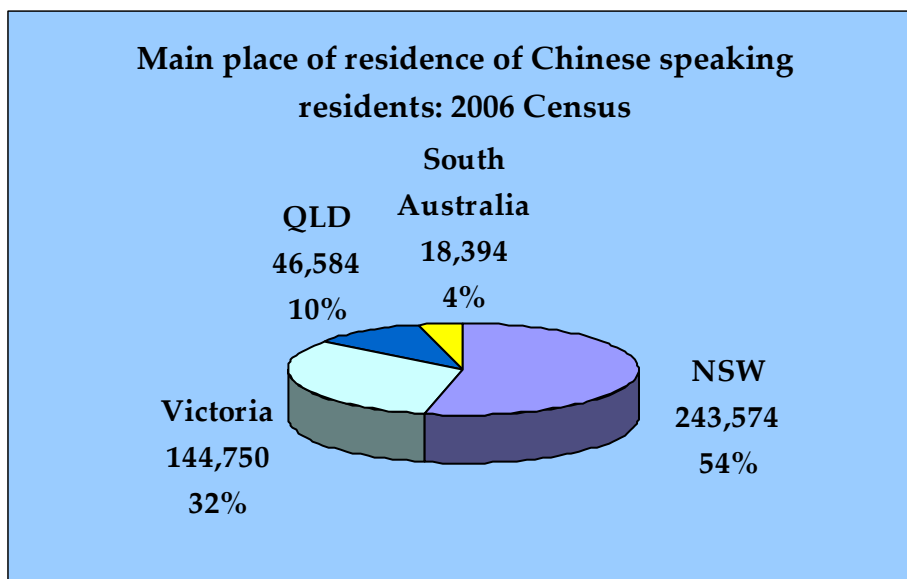
Table 8: Top 10 Languages Other than English Spoken at Home in NSW, 2006

Language	Speakers
Arabic	164986
Cantonese	129606
Mandarin	100594
Italian	87297
Greek	86158
Vietnamese	74588
Spanish	49557
Hindi	38147
Korean	36683
Tagalog	29215

Italian-speaking residents account for 4% of all overseas born residents in Australia. Victoria has the largest number of Italian speaking residents followed by NSW with a total of 87,297 (ABS 2007). Italian has been the largest language other than English spoken in Australia since the 1920s. The two world wars of this century have been of particular importance in the history of Italian immigration to Australia, as the major migration flows have occurred in the decade following the end of each war. Emigration from Italy has almost trickled to a halt since the mid Seventies and has differed from the pattern of the post-World War II migration flow when the majority of Italian-born immigrants came to Australia for work. Prospects for the continued use of Italian language in the home have declined even among the Italian-born, given the trend in the younger age brackets to speak English-only at home (O'Brien 1998).

Main place of residence of Italian speaking residents: 2006 Census

NSW, 87,297 31%

Victoria 133,327 48%

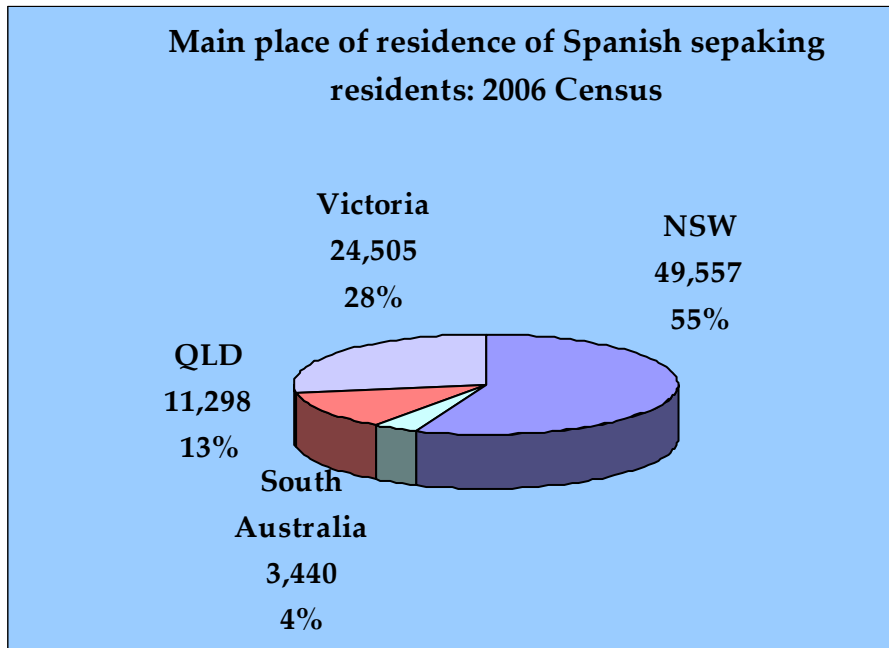QLD 22,030 8%

South Australia 35,817 13%

An important organisation providing services including Italian language classes is the Italian Association of assistance Co.As.It., first established in NSW in 1968 under the auspice of the Italian government. The initial aim of the organisation was to assist the large number of Italians who came to Australia in the post World War II era and to preserve and promote an awareness of the Italian language and culture in Australia. Co.As.It. is one of the major and most active ethnic voluntary agencies and the Out of School Italian classes are offered in more than 30 locations throughout NSW for children aged 5 to 16 years of age. The participation in Italian after hours Community Languages schools is low in NSW (less than 1000 enrolments) compared to the number of speakers (over 87.000) and the nearly quarter of a million claiming Italian ancestry in the state. Co.As.It, almost unique among ethnic community organisations, from the early Eighties has consistently aimed to having Italian taught in primary schools. In pursuit of this multicultural aim in the mainstream school Co.As.It has employed most of the considerable resources it received for language education purposes from the Italian government to support Italian classes in day schools (also known as 'insertion' classes), in-servicing of teachers, creation and distribution of language teaching materials (Di Biase et al. 1994).

Main place of residence of Chinese speaking residents: 2006 Census

South Australia 18,394 4%

QLD 46,584 10%

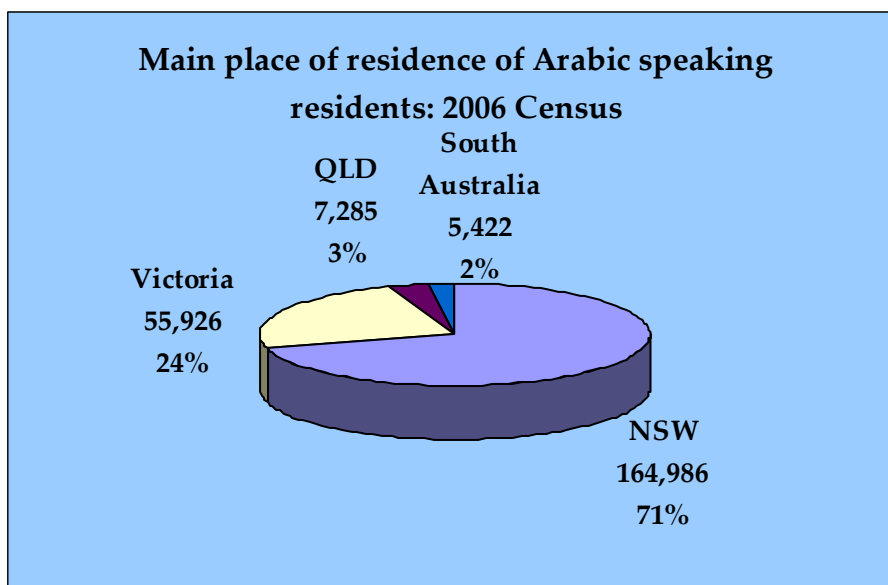Victoria 144,750 32%

NSW 243,574 54%

Cantonese and Mandarin are amongst the most widely spoken community languages in NSW 129606 and 100594 speakers respectively, according to the 2006 Census, and Sydney has the highest concentration of Mandarin and Cantonese speaking communities (ABS 2007). The main birthplaces of Chinese speakers in Australia are PRC, Australia, Hong Kong, Malaysia and Taiwan. Mandarin is the fastest growing language other than English in Australia, more than doubling its numbers (140%) over the last decade. Its international importance is also growing fast hand in hand with China's economic growth and fast increasing world role. Chinese

Mandarin Community schools in NSW (mainly in Sydney) account for well over 5000 students in 2007. This, however, is a far cry from its record demographic increase. In fact numbers have dropped by more than one third over the decade from nearly 9000 enrolments in 1995. Cantonese, on the other hand, a longer established and larger community, while not experiencing the spectacular demographic growth of Mandarin, has increased its participation in Community Languages schools by 40% over the decade.

Main place of residence of Spanish sepaking residents: 2006 Census

Victoria
24,505
28%

NSW
49,557
55%

QLD
11,298
13%

South
Australia
3,440
4%

The Spanish speaking community in Australia is made up of a diversity of countries including Spain, Australian-born, Colombia Chile, Argentina and other Latin American countries. More than half of the Spanish speakers in Australia live in NSW with a further 24 per cent in Melbourne (ABS 2007). Like the Italian government, the Spanish government supports the teaching of Spanish to the children of the Spanish communities abroad. However this would, technically, exclude speakers of Spanish from Latino-American countries, which has traditionally caused some probably unnecessary frictions. Indeed, the participation in after hours Spanish classes in Community School has declined fairly dramatically over the decade from an already small base of420 students in 1995 to just 161 pupils in 2007. This is rather against trends of demographic increases of Spanish speakers (7.4% over the decade) and an increasing popularity of the language in post-primary mainstream education.

Main place of residence of Arabic speaking residents: 2006 Census

QLD 7,285 3%

South Australia 5,422 2%

Victoria 55,926 24%

NSW 164,986 71%

Our fourth and last language to be discussed, Arabic, is the fourth most widely used community language in Australia and is spoken by migrants from countries such as Lebanon, Egypt and Iraq, although the largest population are Australian born. The number of Arabic speakers has registered a healthy 37.2% over the decade. Sydney has the biggest concentration of Arabic speaking residents, followed by Melbourne. The provision of Arabic language in mainstream schools was identified in earlier studies (Clyne & Kipp 1999) as poor and uncoordinated leading to greater emphasis being placed on the family as key in the maintenance of Arabic, while Campbell (1993) warns that being characteristically diglossic competence in Arabic requires control of both colloquial and standard varieties, but the sociolinguistic conditions for the development of diglossia cannot be reproduced in Australia. In addition, given the negative attitudes towards colloquial Arabic, Campbell predicts great difficulties for the maintenance of both standard and colloquial varieties. Nevertheless, 'Arabic', for better or worse, and whichever the definition, has greatly grown in importance in the world stage over the last few years and is playing a greater role this century. With over 6500 students in 2007 Arabic has the largest enrolment in Community Languages schools. Yet this figure represents a rather dramatic decline (37%) from the 10506 students in 1995.

The findings

The range of issues highlighted through these interviews reflected similar concerns as those raised in the literature review, including the following:

- The financial support given to the program

- Various understandings of the role and purpose of Community Languages schools

- Promotion of Community Languages schools in the wider community

- Access to training and professional recognition for Community Languages teachers

- The relationship between Community Languages schools and mainstream schools

- Input from Community Language schools in languages policy and directions at state and commonwealth level.

Financial support for Community Language schools

Issues of financial and therefore institutional sustainability were frequently identified by Community Languages schools coordinators and representatives throughout the interviews as the major challenges of community languages programs. The various concerns raised here include not only the amount of financial support provided for the program, but the process by which funding is allocated. The manner in which funding provision and funding management issues impact in the operation of community languages schools was elaborated in various ways including quality of teaching, resources, reliance on volunteers and the fee charging system introduced by the schools to meet program costs. As one Community Languages schools (CLS) interviewee commented:

What we need the most to make our school better is more funding, funding to pay decent salaries to teachers, buy equipment, materials and other resources. At the moment it feels more like we are running a charity than a language school. We depend on the contribution given by the parents (CLS Coordinator).

One of the biggest challenges identified by principals, teachers and other key stakeholders of Community Languages schools concerns the financial viability of the program under current funding allocation. The allocation of $60 per student per capita funding by the Commonwealth Department has since 1992, only increased by a supplementation amount to keep pace with inflation but the costs of running the program have, according to principals increased exponentially including materials development, textbooks, rent, insurance and reimbursement to teachers. The majority of Community Languages schools pointed to the need to charge fees in order to cover the costs of running their programs. Community language education as a user pay

service is seen by participants in this study as positioning community language acquisition as a leisure activity competing with sports, music and other recreational programs and disadvantages low income families. This also signifies a transfer of responsibility for language education from the public to the private/community sector.

The commonwealth government is making noises about how important it is to maintain community languages and that community schools are the way to go. What they failed to say is that the community has to pay for this because the financial support from the government is minimal. There is a contradiction here and unless the government clarifies its position the message will be lost (CLS Coordinator).

This comment reinforces previous findings (Erebus 2002) that Community Languages schools are insufficiently funded and heavily dependant on a fee paying system and the significant contribution of volunteers to be able to operate their programs. In the Community Languages schools the per capita grant covers less than 20% of the cost and another 80% needs to be found by parents and the community (2002:91).

The funding we get from the department means we have to charge for the service. This is the neo-liberal system because in order for us to function we have to charge money. The parents we attract are not poor, they have money and probably they don't really need the school. Those who really needed it cannot afford it (CLS Coordinator).

One of the main expenses identified by schools is the salaries paid to teachers. There is no uniform policy or guidelines regarding what should be a minimum salary for Community Languages teachers. Some schools were in a position to offer better working conditions and remuneration than others as well as different selection criteria in the recruitment process.

We are demanding in our selection process. It is not enough to be a native speaker of Italian to make you a good teacher of the language. We offer a bit more money than most schools but we also demand the necessary skills and qualifications to deliver a professional service (CLS Coordinator).

The issue of teachers' remuneration was identified by participants in this study as closely linked to teacher's qualifications and expertise. Those schools unable to pay competitive prices complained of the high level of turn over of teachers, lack of financial incentives to recruit qualified and experienced teachers and the reliance in volunteers such as parents and older students to co-teach composite classes.

I am teaching not because of the money. If it were for the money I wouldn't do it because I could get better paid teaching Martial Arts. I do it because I believe it is important to teach the children about their culture and language (CLS teacher).

Having a pool of committed community members willing to donate their time and expertise for the provision of community language education is not a uniform resource available to all communities. This reliance on social and cultural capital is unevenly distributed among communities, as it is the level of expertise, training and qualifications possessed by their members. Current attempts to set up minimum standards regarding teacher' training and qualifications through the MCEETYA *National Statement and Plan for Languages Education in Australian Schools* (2005) has been welcomed by schools in this study. The impact of this strategy however, according to some schools is the prospect that better qualified teachers would be seeking better employment opportunities and remuneration which currently most schools can not provide.

I have a teacher which has been with me since the school started. She is not qualified but she is a good teacher and she has a commitment to this school because her children come here too. Other teachers, they leave as soon as they find a school that pays a bit more than us (CLS Coordinator).

The need to sustain the program by charging fees and other fundraising activities affected some communities that lacked the infrastructure, social and cultural capital, and financial resources to pay for this service leading to a situation where some schools are better resourced and financed than others. Well established communities with strong links with their homeland government's access in some instances financial support for the program and participate in international educational exchanges.

We have a strong community that supports the program through voluntary work and other activities but also we charge fees for the course and if parents can't afford the fees, we try to help but the reality is that we can't survive without charging money for the course. I am hoping the government money is going to help a bit with some of the running costs of the program (CLS Coordinator).

This dependency on the community and in some instances on foreign government support for the provision of community language education in Australia (close to 100,000 students attend Community Languages schools nationally) is particularly problematic for some 'newer' communities from refugee and war torn countries. Emerging communities from war-torn countries and refugees have often had limited access to education in their home countries and lack the necessary skills, training and social networks to establish Community Language schools in Australia (Clyne 2003). Relying on community initiative and social networks as key factors for the development and funding support of Community Language schools can result in uneven resources leading to access and equity issues in the number of community languages available in the community resulting in a diminished access to home language tuition for vulnerable communities.

Some East African communities wanted to start a Saturday school to get the children and their families together and teach the language but they needed further resources and support than what is actually being provided and so they are struggling to get started (CLS representative).

The different levels of ability, resources and networks available for different communities affects their capacity to plan, implement and maintain community language programs for their community. This raises the issue of additional resources and strategies needed to create some uniformity in the level of capacities across the community sector. Current discrepancies that exist in terms of the financial capability, cultural resources and social networks of some communities to establish an effective community language program, need to be addressed particularly in view of the significant numbers of arrivals of people from African, Middle Eastern and south-west Asian countries with limited networks of support available in Australia.

AFESA, the national body representing Community Languages schools in Australia is presenting a case for a national increase in federal funding for the CLSP to be delivered through jurisdictions. A per capita increase of $20-$30 to ethnic schools is sought. AFESA argues that per capita grants need to be increased to allow continued quality provision through ethnic school programs (Baldauf 2005: 91).

The NSW Federation of Community Languages Schools (FCLS), a body representing approximately 80% of all Community Languages schools in NSW is currently arguing for a financial commitment from the state government similar to the support provided by the Victorian government. In Victoria (as well as Tasmania) the state government matches the commonwealth funding for the program making it more viable and in turn less reliant of a fee policy for its survival. In NSW there is not state support for the program in terms of financial

contribution. Currently state government supports the program by providing free access to mainstream schools premises which is however not uniformly implemented across all schools but rather individually negotiated.

Community Language schools in NSW are key providers of LOTE, some of them not even provided in mainstream and Saturday schools. And yet the state government fails to support and contribute financially to this program. It is a failure of vision and a total absence of understanding of what is going on in the community and what service the schools provide to the wider society (CLS representative).

The process by which funding is allocated to Community Languages schools has also been identified as an area where further planning is needed including a better system to ensure schools that comply with program requirements have timely access to their grants. Unnecessary delays in accessing the funds, as argued by principals and program supporters, can hinder the ability of the school to pay essential costs associated with the program. Specific project grants and funding in the areas of professional and material development are also critical, including especial funding for emerging communities that need additional support and mentoring in order to successfully set up their Community Languages schools.

There has to be a more efficient way of managing the funding for the schools. I have personally been forced to take up personal loans to pay teachers and run the program because we can't wait 5 or 6 months for the money to arrive from the government. This is an extra-burden that we shouldn't be dealing with (CLS Coordinator).

The allocation of funds based on the number of enrolments was also identified by some schools as conducive to conflicts, misunderstandings and suspicion, particularly in cases where there are students with commonly used names and surnames.

We have had the department asking questions about students, telling us we made mistakes because we enrolled the same student twice or three times. They don't understand that it is common to have 3 or 4 students with the same name and surname. It creates mistrust, you know… (CLS Coordinator).

In addition to this, some schools have students enrolling late in the program leaving the program half way through the year, once the funds have been allocated. Calls for a better system to fund the program included basic ongoing funding reflecting demographic trends in the area, including overall numbers of student age residents from the language background being taught

by the school and school number trends rather than relying only on year by year allocation based on number of enrolments:

A basic funding should be allocated each year independently of how many students we have. Then it should be toped up depending on the level of new enrolments we get. I think this would make it much easier for us to plan our expenses ahead (CLS Coordinator).

The level of funding allocated to Community Languages schools has been identified by participants in this study as inadequate to meet the demands of the program. This finding is consistent with previous studies (Erebus 2002, Baldauf 2005). Inadequate funding has impacted in various ways including the capacity to recruit and maintain qualified teachers, access to resources and materials and the need to rely on the community to shoulder the costs associated with the program. The limited capacity of some communities, to sustain the costs and contribute their knowledge and skills to the program results in uneven distribution of Community Languages schools and level of resources and expertise available across the various schools.

Current strategies in the MCEETYA *National Statement and Plan for Languages Education in Australian Schools* to standardise Community Languages schools by implementing guidelines on areas such as teacher training and qualifications was perceived by participants in this study to have a direct impact on teacher's higher salary expectations. This has the potential of leading to rising costs for schools and higher teacher attrition.

Current mechanisms in place to allocate funds to the Community Languages schools have been perceived as leading to unnecessary delays in making these funds available to the schools. The rationale of using enrolment numbers as the only framework to allocate funding was also identified as an insufficient benchmark that excluded other considerations such as demographic trends and home language of student age residents in the area.

The role and purpose of Community Language schools

Interviewees articulated various roles of the schools – perspectives articulated in terms of cultural maintenance, intercultural understanding and social cohesion, educational value and economic benefit – often reflecting both the varying expectations people have of community languages and different institutional and community histories. Of central importance is the manner in which language education provided through the community sector facilitates, in some cases, additional support, network activities and solidarity projects among community members – what are often termed 'cultural maintenance', built on ethnically-specific forms what Putnam

(2000) calls 'bonding capital'. Cultural, religious and artistic projects operating alongside language education are more important to some communities than others reflecting different migration histories, experiences and levels of social and cultural capital. As one participant argued,

Our school provides more than language teaching. We have become a network of support for parents, a place to meet and bring our community together so we feel connected and the children have an opportunity to experience this connection through the language (CLS Coordinator).

While all schools articulated a community discourse to some extent, some schools emphasised the community aspect more strongly than others. Different circumstances relating to the settlement history, intergenerational issues, social and cultural capital, and networks of support account for the ways in which linguistic and cultural maintenance issues are addressed. The schools whose community histories developed during the 1970s tended to have a stronger attachment to a community discourse than the newer schools (such as the Mandarin school). On the other hand, schools rooted in a more disadvantaged area also had a stronger attachment to 'community' than those which had come from, or developed, a stronger professional infrastructure. The greater emphasis in developing support networks to sustain cultural and linguistic maintenance meant that some schools operated in a more 'informal' way, establishing personal relationships between teachers and parents and providing opportunities for parents to access the school as a support service to link them to information, support and culturally relevant activities.

While the students are in the classroom many of the parents get together to talk and now they have set up a craft group making Chinese decorations for our cultural events. This is for some of the women the only opportunity to socialise with other Chinese women (CLS Coordinator).

It is important for us that we remain strong, united and we don't lose our culture and values. It is sad to see second generation children unaware of their culture and language ... It is a loss ... (CLS parent).

This 'cultural maintenance' rationale is in complex relationship with a second rationale which emphasises the role Community Languages plays in a broader social context. These sentiments were articulated as a response to a perception of a risk that unless cultural and linguistic practices are maintained the community dissolves as an entity capable of supporting and nurturing its members. This need for cultural solidarities coexist with perceptions that the

stronger the community the greater their ability to exercise bargaining powers to negotiate their positioning within mainstream society and the type of services and programs available to their members. Cultural and linguistic maintenance as a key objective of community language education was perceived by some schools in this study as a key element for survival in the broader society, beyond the specific needs of reproducing a stable language community.

The focus on the rationale of linguistic and cultural maintenance partly reflects where the community is positioned within the tapestry of Australian culture and ethnic relations. It is interesting to notice that well-established and 'integrated' communities such as the Italian community perceive a dual character – in relation to a sense of cultural maintenance and as recognition of the influence of Italian culture, food and way of life in mainstream Australian society. The significant number of students from non-Italian backgrounds learning Italian in the community languages school is evidence of a shift from language and cultural *maintenance* as a key objective of Community Languages schools to a broader objective of linguistic and cultural *promotion* from the perspective of the organisation, made possible by migration, settlement history and cultural specificities of the Italian-Australian relationship.

Against arguments that teaching community languages encourages cultural and linguistic segregation, this view argues that language education is a tool to increase intercultural harmony by fostering a robust sense of self-identity.

Having people who actually understand their own identity and the fact that your identity is not formed but one factor among a multiplicity of factors and you can move in and out of those identities then you can contribute to Australian society and bridge between communities; that is what I think happens at community schools, if it is done properly (CLS representative).

There was a common understanding among some Community Languages schools in this study that more than language instruction takes place in the classroom. Some schools perceive themselves as providing broader experiences and skills as important by-products of LOTE education.

Of course our priority is teaching the language, but Community Language schools are more than providers of language education, but I don't think this is formally acknowledged (CLS teacher).

The perceived role of Community Languages schools by teachers and principals as one of promoting intercultural understanding and cultural capital by building stronger communities

capable of moving between cultures counteracts arguments and concerns by political and media representatives that Community Languages schools encourage cultural separatism (*Daily Telegraph* 2006a).

It is difficult to explain to my Australian friends why we send our children to the … language school. They often see it as proof that we don't want to be part of the Australian society and there is suspicion and misunderstanding. For us, it is the opposite; we want to be part of this society but not at the expense of our cultural heritage and language (CLS parent).

The 'community agenda' as a characteristic of Community Languages schools was seen by participants in this study as fostering greater community building and 'authentic' language and cultural experiences not found in the mainstream classroom. This distinct nature of Community Languages schools positions them, according to teachers, not in competition with or even as supplementary to language education provided in mainstream schools, but as a unique model of language education which connects with and augments other forms of educational experience.

I actually think there should be another system of education and that is the community languages. You need a legal recognition of that system. So you have government schools, non-government schools and Community Language schools recognised by government for their unique role and that is language education (CLS parent).

The 'community agenda', however, was not uniformly shared by all the schools in this study. As pointed out by some parents and students from well-established communities with second and third generation members, most of them born and educated in mainstream Australian schools, the rationalities for participating in the program are no longer simply linked to cultural projects but express other priorities. This 'community' framework contrasts with other schools that see their role more closely aligned with a business model, indicative of different needs and positioning within the larger mainstream Australian society. This approach correlates well with an increasing emphasis, since the 1980s, on the learning of community languages for pragmatic purposes, such as educational and economic benefit.

At our school most parents don't get involved with the school. Many parents send the children because it is important that they learn another language or the mother language. They see the educational benefits and we have many Anglo-Australian children learning Italian because their parents love Italian and want the children to learn another language (CLS Coordinator).

These various concerns aren't necessarily in contradiction, of course, but indicate the ways the diverse settlement histories of different communities and intergenerational change translate into different expectations regarding the role of Community Languages schools.

I was born here in Australia and I have never been to Uruguay so for me, bringing my daughter to the school is really more because I want her to be bilingual. Learning a second language helps her with her mental skills and gives her a better understanding of the world (CLS parent).

My mum and dad want me to learn Mandarin because it is an important language and I think it can help me in the future to get a job overseas (CLS student).

Objectives such as the educational and economic advantages that accrue from learning a second language are recognised as laudable by linguistic experts (Baldauf 2004; Clyne 2002) yet they are often absent from Community Languages schools literature given its historical association with cultural and linguistic maintenance by ethno-specific communities. The above comments illustrate that Community Languages schools are increasingly meeting various needs and responding to complex changes in the make-up of the communities, including training, educational and future employment expectations in a globalised world beyond the transnational experience of migrants themselves. The significance of Community Languages schools in developing the linguistic and cultural resources of Australian society and contributing to its economic and international development has long been claimed rhetorically (Lo Bianco 1987 ; MCEETYA 2005:2), but it is perhaps only with the flourishing of 'Chinese' schools that we can see the magnitude of their potential.

Cultural and linguistic maintenance for some communities such as the Chinese necessitated the acquisition of the 'national' language Mandarin as opposed to regional languages. A significant minority of students at the Mandarin school, for example, came from Cantonese or Haka backgrounds, and the family of one of the students we interviewed had lived primarily in Malaysia. Some children and their parents believed that learning this 'second' language was essential for economic reasons as well as being part of a larger 'Chinese cultural heritage'.

We speak Cantonese at home but we want our children to speak Mandarin. It gives more opportunities in the future as Mandarin is the official language (CLS parent).

We don't speak Mandarin at home. My first language is English and my parents speak Cantonese. I am learning Mandarin because in the future if I want to get a job overseas, Mandarin would be more advantageous than Cantonese (CLS student).

Learning Mandarin, not as a home language but as a tool for wider cultural identity and in terms of economic opportunity introduces further complexities to the understanding of the role of Community Languages schools beyond the notion of linguistic maintenance. This additional role of Community Languages schools as a medium to increase intra-cultural cohesion between linguistically different communities positions Community Languages schools as more than providers of language and cultural education but as complex institutions where communities construct and negotiate their identity and agree on what knowledge is required to be perceived as belonging to a particular group.

It is important for the students to visit mainland China and experience their cultural heritage and practice Mandarin with the local people (CLS Coordinator).

An important component of the Mandarin language program in the Community Languages school in this study was annual trips to mainland China, partly sponsored by the Chinese government and partly self-funded. This was seen by teachers and parents as a unique opportunity to practice the language and help the students develop an appreciation of the advantages and opportunities available to them by being fluent in Mandarin.

My daughter and I went with the school to China and it wasn't till then that she realised the advantages of being able to understand Mandarin (CLS parent).

Learning Mandarin by some second generation migrants from Hong Kong whose parents speak Cantonese at home, for example, becomes a strategy to access the material, linguistic and cultural resources associated with Mandarin and mainstream China. The higher marketplace value of Mandarin in relation to Cantonese (Clyne & Kipp 1999) affects the emphasis placed on its 'maintenance' by some of its speakers, especially in an international context in which China is rapidly emerging as a dominant economy. Increasingly, then, such economically-driven language choices are about a global environment, not simply options within the national economy of Australia. This example illustrates the challenges and complexities surrounding notions of 'community' – presumed linguistic as well as cultural 'community' – when in fact we are dealing with diverse groups from different birthplaces and with different languages negotiating boundaries and often, as in the case with the 'Chinese community', with a vision of China as a historical reference point rather than a putative cultural motherland (Tan 1999).

This role of Community Languages schools as providing the tools for intra-cultural management and negotiation is relevant not only to the Chinese community but also the Arabic and Spanish among others. In the case of Spanish schools, the diversity of values, beliefs and

linguistic characteristics among the Spanish-speaking communities from Central and South American countries and between them and those from Spain gives the Community Languages school a 'multicultural' character operating within various degrees of a common shared sense of cultural identity, particularly between Spanish speakers from Latin American countries.

In our school we have children from Chile, Argentina, Colombia and El Salvador and sometimes the children have difficulties understanding me if I use words or expressions that are common in Chile but not in El Salvador or Colombia (CLS teacher).

Cultural identity in these cases encompasses a more complex interplay of factors including a wider understanding of belonging that goes beyond specific national or provincial localities and traditions to include wider identity configurations based on various linguistic and historical connections rather than shared heritage per se. The desire to group together, as seen in the various Spanish-speaking communities, also arises from the perception that, individually, they do not have enough members for effective mobilisation, or are divided by sectarian politics. This suggests that we need to see Community Languages schools in these circumstances as part of the process of *constructing* a cultural or linguistic 'community', not *maintaining* a pre-existing one. This process of creating some degree of unity also leads to complex hybridities characterised by interculturality and supported by a willingness to accommodate cultural specificities between countries in exchange for greater cohesion, power and resources to negotiate their survival in a culturally alienating environment.

There is a lot of diversity among countries in Latin America but here in Australia those differences don't count as much. Here is more a matter of survival and we need each other to survive as a 'Spanish community' (CLS Coordinator).

Similar views regarding this accommodation of 'difference' in order to enhance cohesion and strengthen cultural survival were expressed by the Arabic-speaking communities. In addition to linguistic commonality, religious identity also played a significant role in the decision by some parents to enrol their children in the Arabic schools and a means for enabling the negotiation a commonality across contrasting national, linguistic and ethnic heritages.

For some parents it's important that their children can read the Koran and that's a major motivation for bringing their children here. We have students from Indonesia, Pakistan and India learning Arabic in order to read the Koran among other reasons (CLS Coordinator).

This 'border crossing' (Anthias 2001) between cultures highlights the existence of multiple belongings which also takes place between minority groups and mainstream society as new practices are adopted and merged with old ways to create novel cultural practices and adaptations (Anthias 2001). The skills required to perform these adaptations problematise essentialist and static approaches to culture and ethnicity and call, among other things, for a re-thinking the objectives of community language education in Australia, including its potential to mobilise intercultural identities and collective solidarities around other boundaries.

The current *National Statement* (MCEETYA 2005:2) argues, among other things, that learning languages 'contributes to social cohesiveness through better communication and understanding' and 'enables our learners to communicate across cultures', yet the evidence suggests that little is done by state authorities to recognise this and to utilise community language education to enhance social cohesiveness and intercultural dialogue. Representatives of Community Language schools in this study believe there is a great potential to use them as tools for cross-cultural understanding by creating opportunities for the exchange of cultural and linguistic knowledge among diverse communities in Australian society. Rather than being breeding grounds of ethnic separatism, the intercultural connections fashioned through Community Languages schools might be best seen as developing the skills and resources necessary for living within a culturally diverse country like Australia.

Our schools welcomes children whose home language is not Mandarin. We have some Anglo-Australian children in our school and one of them went to China. It creates a bridge that allows them to understand better other cultures and to avoid misunderstandings (CLS Coordinator).

The development of curriculum materials by some schools in this study paid specific attention to ensuring relevance to the local context as well as sensitivity to its potential to generate intercultural skills.

The students have text books donated by overseas governments but in addition we develop lesson plans about life in Australia so the students can use the language in a more realistic context. Often things don't quite translate like in some expressions you use when you want to be polite, or congratulate or some ceremonies that we don't have in the Australian context. In these instances we often have to explain and help the students unfamiliar with these expressions to understand the culture and this helps them becomes more understanding towards others (CLS Coordinator).

The argument of Community Languages schools as providers of inter-cultural understanding positions them as potential tools for strengthening communities through 'bridging capital', that is, 'mechanisms that bridge the community to other groups outside of their community' (Calma 2006:2; Putnam, 2000). Recent racial tensions such as 'the Cronulla riots' according to Calma, are evidence of poor investment in developing resources to strengthen this 'bridging capital'.

Despite this diversity of interpretations of the potential roles and activities taking place in Community Languages schools, the development of linguistic expertise remained the main priority for all the schools in this study as it symbolised their expertise as educational providers.

We take great pride when our students perform well. It reflects on our school and our community (CLS Coordinator).

This priority of high standards of linguistic expertise is often neglected in studies about community provision of language education, because these schools are often seen to be primarily about cultural maintenance (with a perceived oral emphasis) rather than language learning as an *educational* pursuit. The perceived binary between mainstream and community language education is often framed as superior/inferior, professional/amateur, mainstream/ complementary, implying lower standards and relevance as a 'serious' provider of LOTE education in Australia. Participants in this study believed that Community Languages schools provide in most cases superior education by the very community context in which the learning takes place.

I study Arabic in the day school as well but I learn more here because we do everything in Arabic, the games, and even in the playground we speak Arabic to each other (CLS student).

The above comment illustrates the need to conceptualise notions of non-mainstream education away from hierarchical binaries and develop new tools to understand the complex array of linguistic, social, educational and cultural projects taking place parallel to the provision of language education rather than at the expense of. it The different interpretations of the role and status of Community Languages schools and the quality of the language education provided needs to be addressed including the perceived symbolic associations between the concept of community education and 'recreational' and 'unprofessional' activity.

We have various schools operating on Saturday and Sunday mornings, including yoga and tai Chi classes. The community language school comes here on a Saturday to teach Chinese and organise events. It is a cultural activity for their own community (mainstream school Principal).

Participants involved in Community Languages schools perceive their roles and objectives in various ways, reflecting a diversity of circumstances, expectations and motives as well as positions within the broad tapestry of Australian culture and ethnic relations. Under the banner of 'Community Languages', various educational, cultural and social projects take place including the promotion of intra-cultural organisation, community cohesion and intercultural understanding. The role Community Languages schools play in the wider community, their linguistic competence and cultural resources are used in different ways by participants to meet specific needs and agendas. The array of social, cultural and intercultural 'projects' taking place alongside language education add complex layers to the understanding of Community Languages education, demanding a more nuanced approach and philosophy than currently espoused by educational authorities.

Recognition of Community Language schools in Australian society

Despite the various areas of expertise available at Community Languages schools, including the claimed superiority of the learning experience, these have often not been adequately recognised by governments and mainstream institutions. Some Community Languages schools in this study reported difficulties and challenges in gaining recognition from different groups and institutions within Australian society. Currently the only formal recognition Community Languages schools receive from the government is in the form of the Ministers Awards which, according to teachers and coordinators, is the most sought-after award by many schools as it means acknowledgement of the quality of language education being provided by the schools.

Being nominated for the awards is a great privilege and we take this event very seriously because it is a way of showing the quality of our program (CLS teacher).

The issue of recognition and promotion by state and federal government bodies was highlighted as relevant to the capacity of Community Languages schools to attract new students from a variety of cultural and linguistic backgrounds to the program. Some schools were struggling to keep up their numbers, particularly established communities with second and third generation migrants and in regional areas with limited migration from non-English speaking background countries.

Unless we get more Spanish speaking people moving to this area it is going to be very hard to maintain this school. Probably it is the same with established communities, you start having less and less students as second generations integrate more within the system and currently we are not set up to attract monolingual students wanting to learn Spanish (CLS Coordinator).

The fact that some Community Languages schools were not attracting mainstream students wanting to learn a second language was linked to the manner in which these schools are perceived, the status of the second language in the wider community and the level of promotion and support by mainstream education and government bodies.

We are seen as an ethno-specific service and we need the government to promote us as a language school for the community in general and also promote the importance of learning a second language (CLS Coordinator).

Devoting extra time to promote Community Language schools and language education to mainstream students was, to some schools, beyond their resources and capabilities. There was also a perception that local and federal government bodies such as MCEETYA and DET should be shouldering this task of making Community Languages schools a viable option for mainstream students to learn a second language.

We don't get the recognition and respect from mainstream schools and mainstream education. This is partly because the government don't promote and treat us as public education providers but as ethno-specific organisations (CLS Coordinator).

Many participants in this study argued for more direct involvement from state and federal agencies in lifting the profile of Community Languages schools in the wider community along with promotional strategies to encourage students to participate in these programs by highlighting the crucial economic, cultural and inter-cultural value of earning and maintaining a second language.

What we have is a structural problem. Unless the government rethinks its position regarding the value of second language acquisition in Australia and invests accordingly in community schools we will continue struggling with financial issues, teachers' recruitment and accessing adequate resources to conduct our program (CLS Coordinator).

The perceived absence of official support for first language maintenance despite the widespread belief by professional educators and parents that it helps to foster literacy was interpreted by participants in this study of a lack of understanding by the government of the benefits of linguistic diversity.

Teaching community languages not only helps with the maintenance of the first language but increase the knowledge of English along with many other analytical and problem solving skills.

But the government keeps pushing this very narrow view that it is through the use of English as the language of instruction that students can achieve expected literacy and numeracy levels (CLS representative).

Some participants in the study voiced the need for greater clarity regarding requirements and strategies to respond to current challenges facing Community Languages schools, including new requirements set up by MCEETYA's *National Statement*. They identified the need for greater leadership from the Board and program administrators in providing vision, support and promoting the program to mainstream schools and educational institutions. In NSW the Community Languages Schools Board, in charge of administering the program funds and providing support to schools, is made up of representatives from the government and the NSW the Federation of Community Language Schools. However, some participants in this study pointed out to a perception of limited opportunities for the schools to better communicate with the Board and work together to address the challenges faced by the communities in maintaining their community language education programs and lift their profile in the wider society. Addressing the role and purpose of the Board was seen by some participants in this study as important to ensure it can function as both, an administrative body managing the funding of the program, and as body of expertise on Community Language School issues, fully committed to its maintenance, promotion and development.

The problem with the Board is partly a generational problem; people with old ways of doing things. Also, the Board has no power to make recommendations to the Minister. We need to review the composition of the Board and criteria for getting into the Board. At the moments it feels like it is rubberstamping of government policy (CLS representative).

Some schools pointed to the need to have more regular communication between the Board and the schools and to ensure website information is updated and better used as a tool to engage schools in direct dialogue with Board members and the department.

There is a website for the schools but the information is not updated and even some of the contact numbers are wrong. It should be updated and used to provide the schools with information, resources and ways to address our concerns (CLS parent).

Community Language schools perform different functions according to changes and developments in the communities they initially sought to serve. Established communities with second and third generation residents, most of them born and educated in Australia make up a different school community and articulate different needs in relation to language education. This

diversity of projects and priorities is however not being reflected in the literature nor in social policy agendas which still equate community schools as marginal institutions serving local interests and community agendas. Addressing the key issue of the make up of Community Languages schools in the twenty-first century and the various, complex roles they perform needs to be reflected in policy documents, funding and promotional arrangements by local and federal government. Local management bodies need also to review their current systems to communicate, support and promote Community Languages schools in order to perform more effectively and become more representational of their concerns and priorities.

Community Languages schools are facing new challenges brought about by recently introduced legislation and requirements. There is a need to provide stronger guidance on how to address these changes and ensure Community Languages schools fulfil their new obligations in terms of accountability, reporting and training. Useful examples of greater communication opportunities between Community Languages schools, program administrators and lobby groups to address these issues can be found in Victoria where the majority of the Community Languages schools are affiliated to the Ethnic Schools Association of Victoria (ESAV 2006). This organisation facilitates meetings of Community Languages school coordinators, forums on current issues and coordinates the provision of teacher training. It also provides a unified voice representing the large majority of Community Languages schools in Victoria and a strong link between the schools and government.

Training and professional recognition of Community Languages teachers

A crucial issue voiced by participants was the status of Community Languages school teachers, the level of training and support available to them and the opportunities to advance their teaching skills and be recognised as professional language educational providers. As one teacher argued, this could be frustrating given their experience and expertise:

I was a teacher in my country but here my qualifications are not recognised. I am teaching at the school on Saturdays but my goal is to be able to work fulltime as a teacher in a day school ... to become a real teacher (CLS teacher).

For some participants in this study teaching at a community language school is perceived as a pathway to further employment preferably in a mainstream school. Often community language teachers see themselves not as 'real' teachers because of the role, status and recognition

attached to community education. The casual nature of their employment and numbers of hours, often no more than 3 hours a week, means that most Community Languages school teachers have a permanent or main job somewhere else, some as teachers in mainstream school but many others in various unrelated positions.

The quality of the community language education, as argued by principals and key stakeholders, is largely dependent on the teachers, their skills, educational backgrounds, professional training and teaching skills. Currently the quality of the teaching provided varies from school to school with some jurisdictions having more resources than others to employ fully qualified teachers. Program requirements attached to funding for Community Languages schools, require teachers to have minimum professional development standards and/or participate in professional development courses offered by the Program.

Good teachers with professional experience, training and native knowledge of the language are hard to recruit unless you offer them good salary and incentives. Good teachers are essential, you have a bad teacher and the students lose interest and the class falls apart. That's why I personally make sure all my teachers access training and have the resources to develop quality lessons (CLS Coordinator).

We have some teachers who could benefit from the training but honestly it is very hard to send them to do this training when they work fulltime during the week and have other responsibilities (CLS Coordinator).

Current disparities between schools regarding the training, qualification, experience and bilingual skills of the teachers lead to uneven outcomes and expectations. The recognition of the need to invest in teacher's training and material development was recognised as important by all the schools but, as the above comment illustrates, financial and time constraints prevented some schools from pursuing these outcomes. Assessing what makes a good teacher also highlighted some differences in understanding of what makes a good community language teacher. Some parents and students pointed to the capacity of teachers to facilitate real linguistic and cultural experiences with and among the students as a key skill in the classroom.

The teacher is not really strict and we get to talk to each other in the classroom, so it feels more relaxed, more fun than day school and you also learn in a different way, less structured (CLS student).

The emphasis on cultural and linguistic competence means that teachers are required to have specific skills and teaching tools that are unique to the context of the Community Language school. Native speakers are regarded as best positioned to teach in these schools and often this can be the only essential criteria by some, less resourced schools, resulting in a disparity of teacher's skills and qualifications across the sector. This disparity, however, should not necessarily be equated with poor linguistic outcomes for schools with less qualified teachers. Measuring teacher's competence in the Community Language sector requires inclusion of other evaluative mechanism including level of integration of students within the classroom and school community and capacity to facilitate networks of cultural and linguistic support among students. Currently some Community Languages schools evaluate these achievements in an informal and unstructured way through feedback from parents and level of participation and inclusion of students in the school community.

Part of my role is to make sure students are happy and they are making friends with other students. To build a strong sense of community and identity is important so the students and parents see the school as a community rather than a place where the children go on Saturday while the parents do shopping. (CLS teacher).

Comments like this alert us to the need to consider issues such as teacher's training and skills within wider parameters that reflect the contextual specificities of Community Language education. Professional development courses for teachers through the CLEP have been praised by teachers and principals as crucial tools for developing professional teaching practices. The training provided includes areas such materials development, teaching methodologies and student evaluation. The evidence in this study is that such training programs increases teachers' understanding of Australian educational system and methodologies including a recognition of the importance of communicative and constructivist approaches to curriculum development and implementation, and the contextualisation of language learning to students' everyday life in Australia.

Through training teachers become aware that language proficiency per se does not necessarily makes you a good teacher. Understanding how learning takes place and what teaching methodologies can better engage students is vital (CLS Coordinator)

In our school we ensure the teachers understand that we are teaching in Australia and students can not be expected to learn by memorising rules but by associating sounds with images and making them relevant to their everyday experiences. But in order to learn this we need training because many teachers simply don't know how to teach in the Australian context (CLS Coordinator).

Some coordinators identified the need of providing the training on a more regular basis rather than as it is currently done, once a year, often towards the end of the school calendar year when it is less needed. The location of the training was also an issue for schools located in areas distant from the training centres. Given the work commitments most Community Language teachers have during the week, making this training accessible and flexible can potentially see more teachers taking part on it. Providing remuneration for the time teachers spend to participate in training has also been identified as fair and in alignment with mainstream schools' practices.

The new requirements ask teachers to take training but it is not paid. Mainstream teachers when they attend training they get paid for it, so we need to look at why this is the case (CLS representative).

Developing partnerships between teachers in Community Languages schools and mainstream schools to facilitate access to DET language resource materials was also identified by teachers as important to reduce lesson preparation time as well as providing teachers with better understanding of mainstream classroom activities.

I would like to see what materials teachers use in the day schools so we can provide a similar program and complement each other but we have not contact at all with the school (CLS Coordinator).

Our language teachers do not feel comfortable giving lesson materials to the community language teachers. There is a tension here, a perceived threat I guess, that community language teachers could somehow undermine teachers' position in the school, or something like that (mainstream school Principal)

As the above comments illustrates, training and resources available to mainstream schools are currently not accessible to Community Languages schools and this disadvantages teachers and students in the Community Languages sector. Such resources are perceived to potentially enhance Community Languages school teacher's capacity to provide wider educational language spectrums and direct their educational goals more aligned with school curriculum.

There are currently uniform requirements for Community Languages schools regarding the level of training, qualifications and experience of Community Languages school teachers, but not all teachers are qualified in the same way, e.g. some are qualified overseas. Current attempts to set up minimum standards for all teachers is going to have an impact on some schools, particularly those with limited financial resources to attract and retain qualified teachers. Formal recognition of Community Languages teachers and provisions for formal recognition is desirable. Strand 5 of the *National Plan for Language Education in Australian Schools 2005-2008* is quality assurance and its objective is to 'monitor and evaluate the provision and quality of languages education at all levels' (MCEETYA 2005). The Actions outlined in the Plan to achieve this outcome include measuring students' outcomes through national standards and developing an Annual National Reporting on Schooling, which are generic in character and make no reference to the specificities of teaching in the Community Languages sector.

The different contexts, agendas and learning experiences between mainstream and Community Languages schools need to be recognised and addressed when trying to implement the *National Plan*. How to 'measure' progress and develop national sample assessment processes to determine student learning outcomes requires different tools which recognise where Community Languages schools have been positioned, the resources made available to them and the priorities and needs they address. Developing these tools to measure, monitor and evaluate Community Languages schools in a uniform manner remains a challenge which can be best addressed through comprehensive consultations with the schools themselves.

Teaching in a Community Languages school is perceived by some teachers as a pathway to become mainstream teachers by giving them access to work experience in the Australian context. However there is not current tertiary system that incorporates this experience as part of accreditation towards a professional teaching degree. Developing such links between community language providers and universities to facilitate the acquisition of professional teaching qualifications, could be explored as a strategy to enhance the role of Community Languages schools as providers of accredited training experience for teachers seeking to enter mainstream education. The Australian Catholic University has taken some steps in this direction.

The *National Statement and Plan* (2005) calls for strategies to support and enhance professional learning for Community Languages school teachers. In Victoria, through the accreditation and accountability processes that have been negotiated between the Department of Education and Training and ESAV, ethnic school programs have improved their provision significantly in terms of curriculum development linked to the Curriculum Standards Framework, teacher professional development and training and materials development (Erebus 2002:87).

Such coordinated approach and cooperation between state education departments and Community Languages schools could be replicated in NSW to allow Community Languages school teachers to access professional development and resources provided by DET for mainstream teachers, particularly in view of current attempts to bring Community Languages schools closer to mainstream language education.

The relationship between Community Language schools and mainstream schools

Current arrangements by DET which allows Community Languages schools free access to mainstream schools, although seen as a positive strategy which saves the Community Languages schools money, was also criticised by most participants in this study as problematic partly because of the limitations imposed in this arrangement. Use of school premises does not include access to school resources such as audio-visual material, white boards, photocopy machines and cleaning equipment.

We don't have access to any equipment, or even to space to leave the books, whiteboards or vacuum cleaners. Every Saturday we must bring all this equipment and it makes it very hard for us (CLS Coordinator).

We tried to negotiate with the school to be allowed to have a cabinet permanently at the school so we could store all the books in it. The school refused by saying they didn't have the space to put the cabinet but as you can see from this huge room it wouldn't have been too hard to put a cabinet on that corner (CLS Coordinator).

Currently schools negotiate independently access to these resources and positive outcomes in these negotiations are dependant not on guidelines but on the attitudes and understandings of mainstream school's principal regarding Community Languages schools. There are not uniform

policies on the use of classroom resources, office space and infra-structure and changes such as the arrival of a new principal may mean in some cases the loss of support and commitment from the mainstream school towards the program.

We had a wonderful school principal but he retired and the new one did not really know about our school. I guess, there is a tendency to see us as another community group, similar to the judo or dancing classes that use the school on weekends (CLS Coordinator).

The lack of coordination and cooperation between Community Languages schools and mainstream schools was seen by some participants in this study as a disadvantage for the students. Having mainstream schools acknowledging and praising the participation of students in Community Languages schools through awards was seen by some parents as a positive strategy to boost the confidence of Community Languages school students and integrate this achievement within the mainstream school community. Other strategies proposed included a system for mainstream schools to recognise the academic progress achieved by students through Community Languages schools.

We could have a report card made available to the child's school so they can see what level of language competence the student has and this report could be used by the teacher (CLS parent).

Such strategy however was seen by other Community Languages coordinators as unrealistic unless appropriate funding, guidelines and support was given to Community Languages teachers to take on this additional task.

Writing reports for day schools would need to be standardised and schools like ours have hundreds of students from many areas and schools and we will need to have protocols in place to communicate with the school. I can see this becoming a monumental task beyond the resources and duties allocated to teachers (CLS Coordinator).

Underlying these challenges, some participants argued, is the need to address the current issue of recognition and endorsement by the NSW Board of Studies of Community Languages schools as educational providers with similar status to mainstream schools.

The benefits of such recognition outlined by participants in this study included:

- Access by community languages schools to DET funding, resources, training and support

We could actually run on similar lines to the Saturday schools in terms of the funding, resources and recognition but maintaining the community agenda (CLS Coordinator).

- Recognition and accreditation of students' results for High School Certificate purposes

It would be a great incentive for the students to get recognition for the time and effort spent in the school. At the moment it bears no relationship at all with the demands of mainstream school, especially for years 11 and 12 students (CLS teacher).

- Reporting mechanism in mainstream schools that incorporate student's results in Community Language schools

Being able to get some kind of recognition in the students' report would give the students a sense of achievement and recognition (CLS parent).

- Greater opportunities for community languages schoolteachers to gain recognition to allow them employment in mainstream schools, e.g. via bridging courses.

Teachers in Community Language schools want to work in the mainstream system and greater cooperation between the two systems could include allowing us teachers to gain experience in mainstream schools (CLS teacher).

Community Language schools have been identified by MCEETYA as LOTE providers along with mainstream schools. However, as the above comments illustrate, this equal status allocated by the federal government is not reflected in practice. Community Languages schools remain marginal in relation to mainstream schools and there are no significant strategies currently in place to address this subsidiary character. As a result Community Languages schools have to compete with other recreational and social groups for access to school premises and required to provide for themselves basic materials such as white boards, chalk, dustpans and erasers.

The current emphasis of the *National Plan* (2006) on the 'mainstreaming' of community languages schools and their equal status as a provider of LOTE education needs to be taken on board by the NSW Department of Education and Training. The evidence from this study is that Community Languages schools occupy a subsidiary position as a provider of language education and this is reflected in the existing relationship between Community Languages schools and mainstream schools. The Languages Plan which is a MCEETYA rather than a state strategy does not differentiate between mainstream and Community Languages schools and regards them all as 'providers', but the NSW Board of Studies has yet to respond to the challenges and requirements by commonwealth authorities.

Some obstacles currently preventing community schools from becoming recognised as 'professional' providers in NSW includes the NSW Board of Studies' definition of a 'school' as a provider of multiple subjects approved by the Department of Education and Training and by teachers with DET recognised qualifications. The National Plan recommends community language teachers to participate in training and acquire teaching skills recognised by MCEETYA and the NSW Board of Studies should find a role in this. Addressing these issues would be crucial in clarifying the position of community languages schools in NSW and their relationship to mainstream language providers.

Conclusion and considerations

'Language is a key to culture and bilingualism a key to an understanding of cultural relativity' (Clyne 2007:2).

This small study has attempted to begin the process of mapping the issues facing the Community Languages movement – these will become increasingly important over the course of the twenty-first century. To conclude, we want to draw out some conceptual issues that we think are pertinent for considering the future of Community Languages and then suggest some practical issues that need addressing.

Community Languages are still, and will continue to be, fundamentally about the desire for cultural maintenance; however, we need to reconsider what this means, and we need to engage seriously with the limitations of existing 'maintenance' approaches in a culturally complex, globalised world. This study is concerned with Community Language schools as sites where linguistic, cultural and identity issues are *negotiated* by first, second and even third generation communities whose home language is not English. The fact that Community Language schools have existed in various forms ever since migrants from culturally and diverse backgrounds arrived in Australia is evidence that great value is placed in the maintenance of home languages and the use of community based networks and structures to support this process. The role of the family and the family structure in the maintenance of community languages has been previously identified as key (Torres 2006, Smolicz, et al. 2001) with less attention being given to the role of Community Languages schools, as major, and in most instances, only providers of 'home' language experiences. Further, limited attention has been given to issues pertinent to second generation migrants and language maintenance, the complex relationship between language and cultural identity and the role of languages in constituting 'communities' in Australia which as this study highlights can be based on language rather than on national origins. This is particularly the case with pluricentric languages - that is, languages which have been brought to Australia by people from different countries, with separate national varieties and with different sets of linguistics forms (Clyne 1991:1).

This is not just a technical problem of deciding which version of a language is to be taught in classrooms, it is a social issue of understanding the very nature of linguistic 'communities' and cultures. This has become important because multiculturalism as a set of social policies tends to rely on relatively simplistic understandings of cultural community, and doesn't grapple with the increasing cultural complexities of a place like Australia. When classes increasingly comprise second and third generation students who have grown up in interethnic households, these

students increasingly exhibit fluid and multiple identities (Ang, Brand, Noble and Sternberg 2006). Students often embody complex cultural and linguistic backgrounds and migration histories (such as the Malay Chinese student in the Mandarin class whose linguistic heritage was Cantonese. In these classes we can therefore no longer assume that we can teach to singular or stable cultural and linguistic backgrounds (Jones Diaz 2003). How can Community Languages schools adequately fulfil the function of cultural maintenance in these circumstances? Will they effectively contribute to students' senses of identity or equip them with the skills they need to relate to family and wider Australian society?

This has also become important because the context in which we live has changed since the early days of multicultural policies. For a start, Australia has become a harsher place in relation to questions of cultural difference. The increasing criticism of multiculturalism and its role in the creation of social problems, especially in the popular media, have significant impacts on the politics of identity, cultural and linguistic maintenance in Australia (Poynting et al. 2004). Debates in the media about September 11, the Bali bombing, the international 'war on terror', the war in Iraq, Australia's policies regarding asylum seekers, and the ongoing debates about law and order in Sydney, have had the cumulative effect of generating a 'moral panic' in Australia (Anti-Discrimination Board 2003:2). The central feature linking, simplifying and blurring these debates is the *racialisation* of complex social issues, which shapes the ways Australians view ethnicity, language, culture, religion and nationality (Poynting et al. 2004). The strong link between national identity and linguistic homogeneity also impacts in the use of bilingual practice in public sphere. Speaking the language of the nation-state becomes a political act, a sign of patriotism (Scanlon & Sing 2006). Conversely, the use of community languages in public spheres becomes synonym with poor loyalty to Australian 'way of life'. Advocates of Community Languages need to accept that this is the context in which they have to argue for the place and value of the maintenance of homeland languages and not to assume their advantages are accepted by all.

This new context is also an increasingly globalised one. Globalisation has been identified as both hindering and facilitating access to linguistic resources. Globalisation has been linked to the rise of trans-national and global languages. The flows of media, advertising, and commodities carried via mass-produced, globally distributed broadcasting and commerce, mean that global languages such as English are virtually everywhere (Scanlon & Sing 2006:16). While many might see this as evidence of the *need* for Community Languages, again this case has to be made rather than assumed. One way of beginning this task is to develop the understanding of the mother tongue as a resource, not simply a right.

Studies on social capital have highlighted the role of language as a cultural and social capital resource. An ethnic community's social capital, argues Giorgias (2000) encompasses resources available to an individual through their membership in that community or group. It involves the shared feelings of social belonging – what is called bonding capital – that enable groups to set up institutions and other networks that members can access. Social capital in these communities exists in the social relations among parents, between parents and their children and their relationship with the institutions of the community.

A study of first generation Greek, Italian, German and Dutch migration during the post-war period concluded this social capital, achieved partly through social distance or closure, provided a sense of security and protection from discrimination and alternative resources of moral and material resources. These alternative social and economic resources also become available to the second generation but the dilution of cultural boundaries weakens ethnic groups and the social capital resources, as it has been the case among the Dutch and German (Muenstermann 1997).

The social capital thesis raises important questions relevant to the study of community language maintenance as a tool to access social capital. Conversely, it raises questions regarding the relationship between the decline in some community languages and the loss of social capital brought by dilution of cultural boundaries in these communities. The thesis also makes important claims regarding the relationship between 'ethnic enclaves' (Georgias 2000) and social capital – that is, between maintaining shared goals and a collective sense of identity to facilitate access to alternative social and economic resources not available elsewhere in society.

This view contrasts with traditional assimilation theories which postulate that cultural maintenance hinders successful adaptation (Georgias 2000:5) Collective identity in this context can provide migrant communities with a pool of resources, networks of support and social and economic expectations to achieve certain goals in the wider community that bring prestige and recognition to the individual and her family also within their ethnic community. But it also contrasts with the assumption that the mother tongue stays the same and has the same value forever and ever.

Caution, therefore, is needed to avoid, on one hand, referring to collective identity as an 'ethnic enclave' at the expense of successful interaction with mainstream culture and, on the other hand, to view this identity as essentialist and unaffected by the interactions with the cultural values of the mainstream society. This is particularly relevant when looking at second generation migrants. In Australia young Muslims have been called to 'get out of their ghettoes and interact

with the society we live in', assuming on one hand an essentialist cultural space and on the other implying that such space, rather than broader race, social and economic marginalisation, may also account for their 'ghetto' status. (Skrbis & Baldassar 2006). In other words, to analyse the collective identity of a group defined along ethnic boundaries, more than culture and ethnicity is needed – the politics of identity, inclusion and accommodation of diversity are themes that can provide fertile ground for a more in-depth understanding of the complexities surrounding notions of collective identity.

Much of the literature on community language maintenance has been informed by approaches that equate linguistic maintenance with notions of 'ethnic enclaves' and other essentialist approaches to culture and ethnicity: 'Maintaining intergenerational language use has been interpreted as tantamount to national disloyalty and sedition' (Lo Bianco 2004:5). There is, however, an evolving social consensus that bilingual capacity is an appreciable skill even by those who oppose notions of social and cultural pluralism. The social distribution of bilingualism in Australia is concentrated among three groups: recent migrants, indigenous populations and language enthusiasts and professionals. One of the main obstacles identified in the proliferation of linguistic diversity is the 'global English is enough' fallacy, predominant in Australia (Clyne 2007). The dominant monolingual and monocultural mindset has been identified as the major obstacle in the development of a national policy on languages which devotes resources not only to the learning of the so called 'foreign' languages (Chinese, Indonesian, Korean and Japanese) but to the maintenance and development of 'community' languages of all non-English speaking background Australians.

Economic globalisation arguments, particularly in relation to Australia's engagement with the Asian region link bilingual proficiency with the prospects of successful economic regional partnerships. However, these economic and social rewards for bilingualism are still hard to mount partly given, as mentioned above, to the monolingual mindset predominant in Australia and the global rise of English as the 'lingua franca'. There is a need, Lo Bianco argues (2004), to make recourse to deeper rationalities and arguments of culture, identity and cognition and niche security issues and niche trade issues.

The evidence for wider social benefits from language study shows that we need to work very hard to make language learning produce cultural dividends. Language learning must make much better use of community (multicultural) and foreign (trade, security, national relations) perspectives. All language teaching needs to make better use of community resources, local speakers, institutions and contexts (Lo Bianco 2004:8). Those Cantonese students who were learning Mandarin are an interesting example of how the world is changing: they saw their

learning as a form of cultural maintenance, but admitted that learning Mandarin was like learning another language. But they saw enormous benefits in learning Mandarin because they anticipated returning to or working in China at some stage in their future. None of these students, however, saw these advantages operating within Australia.

Despite the linguistic diversity of Australian society there is, according to critics of language policy in Australia, a notable absence of linguistic plurality in public life, including education (Marginson 2004). The low priority given to LOTE learning in government schools is, according to Marginson (2004), hardly objected by ethnic organisations due partly to the growing global role of English and its increasing usage in the migrant communities' countries of origin along with the belief that educational success, which is a key to upward social mobility is closely tied to mainstream school curriculum with English as its language of instruction.

Various key questions emerge from the above discussions including whether linguistic and cultural diversity can be effectively encouraged and promoted within an Anglo-centric state dominated by a monolingual mindset and perceptions of community language maintenance as inhibitors and evidence of poor 'loyalty' to the 'project of the nation'. Although it is beyond the scope and purpose of this project to provide an answer to this question, some of the findings from the interviews with Community Languages teachers, students and coordinators point to their resilience and determination to communicate cultural and linguistic diversity and demonstrate how the 'project of the nation' can be better equipped by making these resources available to the wider community. Moreover, the kinds of resources and skills being developed within these schools points toward the formation of bridging as well as bonding capital, forms of intercultural connection as well as intra-cultural forms. Social cohesion within a culturally diverse nation does not demand linguistic homogeneity but, as evidenced in the findings of this study, it can be better addressed by optimising the social, economic and cultural benefits of this linguistic and cultural diversity.

In considering these challenges, Community Languages schools can have a significant role to play in the future of Australian society, not by ignoring these issues and maintaining allegiance to the ways things were done 20 years ago, but by tackling them head on. But to do this these schools need to be adequately resourced and administered. So we need to think about practical responses to these challenges. These revolve around certain key issues.

Financial support given to Community Language schools

• A review of the level of funding currently allocated by the federal and state governments to the Community Language School Program is needed, with specific attention to costs associated with teachers' salaries and employment conditions, material development and classroom resources.

• A review by the federal and state governments of the financial impact on Community Languages schools of implementing the MCEETYA *National Statement for Languages Education in Australian Schools* with specific attention to the issue of teacher's salary and employment conditions.

• A review of current funding allocation arrangements including student ratio funding rationale and time frame for submitting and accessing funds by Community Languages schools in NSW.

Various understandings of the role and purpose of Community Language schools

• Further research into the various ways Community Languages schools perform cultural, religious, community and intercultural services to their community and the wider society and the impact of such contributions.

• Further research on how social capital impacts on Community Languages schools and the distribution of this human resource across various communities.

• A review of current strategies in place to promote Community Languages schools to mainstream educational, social and media institutions and possible approaches to increase their visibility and purposes.

• Further research into the various social, cultural and inter-cultural dynamics and solidarities that emerge through the community language experience and its impact in social cohesion and inter-cultural understanding.

• Further discussions in consultation with Community Languages schools, administrators and advocates seeking to develop a common set of guiding principles and objectives on the role of Community Languages schools as providers of linguistic, cultural and inter-cultural competences and resources.

• A review of current arrangements in place to engage Community Languages coordinators and representatives with administrative bodies including the Community Language School Board in view to highlight possible strategies to strengthen this relationship.

• Further research into models used in other states to support Community Languages schools and link them with state and federal administrative bodies in view to highlight possible strategies applicable to the NSW context.

- Consideration of the use of a voucher system for families who wish to pursue languages education for their children in languages not provided for in mainstream schools and universities. This could go hand in hand with a review of the funding to states for languages education (including complementary providers) and calling for matching contribution aiming to increase quality of delivery and a broader coverage of languages, including indigenous languages and those of newly arrived settlers and refugees.

Training and professional recognition of community language teachers

- The development, in consultation with Community Languages coordinators and representatives, of strategies to implement the National Plan in a manner which reflect the specific context, priorities and linguistic, cultural and inter-cultural goals of Community Languages schools.
- A review of current training opportunities available to Community Languages teachers, including accessibility, location and remuneration and time constraints as well as the linkage of training to current requirements outlined in the National Plan by MCEETYA.
- Further research on ways to develop viable pathways to assist Community Languages teachers who lack professional teaching qualifications recognised in Australia, to take advantage of their professional experience in Community Languages schools towards accreditation.
- Further research into existing collaborative arrangements in other states between Community Languages schools and government departments that facilitate exchange of training opportunities and expertise between mainstream and Community Languages teachers.

The relationship between Community Languages schools and mainstream schools

- Further clarification of the relationship and status of Community Languages schools in relation to mainstream education and development of common standards and policies on use of resources, infrastructure, teaching materials and storage of equipment.
- Urgent dialogue between the NSW Board of Studies, MCEETYA, Community Languages Schools Board and Community Languages coordinators and advocates on pathways to implement the National Plan, particularly in relation to accreditation and recognition of Community Languages schools.
- One major key for the achievement of the greater cooperation goal as well as broader, state-wide coverage is offered by the advances of the Internet and the services it offers for setting up Social Networks (practically and without charge). These can be used to setting up appropriately protected, school-based virtual language classrooms, linking up Community

Languages schools with mainstream schools. In addition, such virtual language classrooms would allow languages education reach isolated communities and learners far flung from the physical location of the Community Languages schools themselves.

All these suggestions require a strategic and energetic plan to make Community Languages schools ready to embrace the 'education revolution' and the languages needs of the twenty-first century. Needless to say this requires good policy at all levels, adequate resources across the system and a new 'philosophy' articulating the purposes of Community Languages.

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