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BUILDING CHINESE LANGUAGE CAPACITY IN AUSTRALIA

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Appendix A

INTRODUCTION

In every decade since 1970[1] a report has been published urging development in Asian languages and literacy in Australia. From time to time, notably in 1990 and in 2008[2], considerable amounts of money have been allocated to advance the cause. In 2016, faced with the continuing lack in significant numbers of students graduating from Australian schools with proficiency in Chinese language despite efforts to improve outcomes, it may seem worth asking whether by now Chinese should not just be allowed to sink or swim on its own, as is the case for the other languages taught in schools.

Despite these attempts, and faced with the continuing lack of significant numbers of students graduating from Australian schools with proficiency in Chinese, it is time for a renewal of efforts to promote, protect and even privilege the learning of Chinese in our schools:

- Chinese is a language of unique and continuing significance to Australia in the twenty-first century: we cannot afford not to have a significant percentage of the community workforce with a degree of competence in the language;

- In the past five years there have been breakthroughs in the teaching and learning of Chinese that give ample evidence that it can be made quite learnable to a very high degree of proficiency by virtually any Australian child in the course of their school years. However, like learning any complex skill, to attain a high proficiency in Chinese, it is best to begin young and continue learning over a number of years.

In practical terms, much that is needed to achieve the desired goal is already available, so success would not require more than a fairly modest outlay of funds. What is essential is that those involved with structuring and administering programs for Chinese language

1 The Commonwealth Advisory Committee, 'The teaching of Asian languages and cultures in Australia' (The Auchmuty Report), AGPS, Canberra, ACT, 1970.

2 The Federal Government's National Asian Languages and Studies in Australian Schools (NALSAS) and the National Asian Languages and Literacy in Schools Program (NALLSP), respectively.

education for teachers and students design initiatives thoroughly informed about the special challenges the task requires. Chinese is not Japanese or French. It makes very particular demands. The aim of this report is to explain these demands and show that they can all be met if they are squarely taken into account.

NOTES

1. NOMENCLATURE

1.1 LEARNER CATEGORIES

The recently published Australian Curriculum for Languages: Chinese (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority [ACARA] 2015) details three separate streams of students:

1. First (native) language learners (L1), comprising international students who have grown up in a Chinese-speaking society and have usually completed up to four to five years of secondary schooling in a Chinese society before coming to Australia to prepare for entry to university;

2. Background learners (BL), who have spoken Chinese at home since birth and, whether born in Australia or not, have been schooled in Australia; and

3. Second language learners (L2), who are school learners of Chinese and use it virtually only in a classroom.

Chinese courses offered by the different states use different – even contradictory – names for learner categories and the eligibility criteria for the categories vary from state to state. In this report, the Australian Curriculum's three categories of learners are used but to avoid confusion with local usage, the name of the middle category has been changed to the descriptive term *home speaker learner*. Thus, the report refers to:

1. First language learners (L1), denoting international students;

2. Home speaker learners, denoting local students who have spoken Chinese since birth; these students are designated Background learners in the Australian Curriculum for Chinese and Heritage students and Advanced L2 learners in some states; it should be noted that this category does not include all students of Chinese ethnic background; and

3. Second language learners (L2), who learn Chinese only at school.

1.2 FOUNDATION YEAR

In keeping with the 2015 Australian Curriculum for Languages, the first year of primary schooling is referred to as Foundation (F), replacing the terms Preparatory (Preps/P), Reception (R) and Kindergarten (K) that may still be used in use in some states.

1.3. A CHINESE 'PROGRAM'

The Australian Curriculum for Languages nominates a minimum 350 hours of study in primary years Foundation to Year 6 and 350 hours in Years 7 to 10 as constituting a *language program*. Spread across the seven primary years from Foundation to Year 6, 350 hours equates to 65 minutes a week (or more if the 350 hours are taught over fewer years). In the secondary setting, 350 hours over four years is equivalent to three 45-minute periods a week.

In practice, what is claimed to be a program varies considerably. For example, a great many primary schools teach Chinese in one 30-minute period per week and some only once per fortnight. In formal terms these can scarcely be called language programs as they will not result in students acquiring proficiency in the language. Some schools may have more frequent, shorter lessons across the week, while some have as much as 25 minutes of Chinese every day. Bilingual programs teach between 25 and 50 percent of the curriculum in Chinese.

Secondary programs tend to be more similar, especially in the lower years, with two or three lessons totalling about two hours per week. In the senior years, programs provide between 2.5 and three hours a week, variously configured.

In a cumulative subject that makes a huge demand on memory, the frequency as well as length of classes is a significant factor in success. For efficient learning, the more frequent the engagement, the better.

1.4. MANDARIN

Languages taught in Australian schools are the official standard languages of the country of origin. Thus 'Spanish' is Castilian as spoken in Madrid and 'Chinese' the language of the Beijing government, which calls the language Modern Standard Chinese (MSC) – in Chinese, *Putonghua* – meaning the common, shared, language spoken by everyone in China regardless of the other languages and dialects they might also speak. About 70 percent of Chinese speak some version of MSC as a first language, though accents broaden in the further regions and local vocabulary is often used as well. MSC is spread by being the language of the national media and education as well as of government. Cantonese speakers are the next biggest language group in China, amounting to about nine percent of the population.

When the British and French arrived in China in the mid-nineteenth century, the Qing Emperor was on the throne. The Qing people were a Manchurian ethnic group who had conquered China in 1644. The court officials were *Manzuren,* that is, '*Man* ethnicity men' (Manchus). The foreign arrivals called the ***Manzuren*** 'Mandarins', and their language, the language of Imperial Peking, became known as Mandarin. The Qing Empire dissolved in 1911 and the Manchus continued to live in Beijing alongside the local dominant ethnic group, the Han Chinese, free to lead their lives, albeit mostly in separate, Manchu establishments including shops. Twenty years later, the Japanese invasion of Manchuria and then the rest of China, and the long anti-Japanese war that followed, largely united these ethnic divisions among the Chinese.

When the People's Republic of China was established, the government strongly rejected the term 'Mandarin' as the English name of its national language. This was partly because of its imperial links and partly because it meant calling Chinese the language of the *Man* people, when they wanted it called the language of the majority *Han* people – as it is in Chinese: *Hanyu*. Since then, in Chinese studies circles outside China, the language has been formally called Modern Standard Chinese, and more often just *Chinese*, despite the occasional objection of Cantonese speaking groups. In education in Australia,

just as the language of Spain is called Spanish – not Castilian, despite the many speakers of Spain's other major language, Catalan – the name used is simply *Chinese*. As study of the language expanded in the United Kingdom and the United States in the past 10 to 15 years, however, these countries fell back to using the term Mandarin and recently there has been an increase in the use of this term in Australia.

1.5 LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

In this report, the term *linguistic proficiency* is used to represent the sought after outcome of school language learning and to represent what is needed of those who learn Chinese. The term has been chosen for efficiency, but in doing so it is not intended to exclude other outcomes such as metalinguistic awareness, cultural understanding and intercultural competence. Indeed, it is assumed that real proficiency in a language can only develop if these aspects are a solid part of the learning process.

2. AIM, METHOD AND STRUCTURE

The aim of this document is three fold: to provide a critical account of the current state of Chinese language competence in Australia in light of bipartisan aspirations for its development voiced over decades, to make informed recommendations as to how the number of students learning Chinese in Australian schools can be sustained and increased as well as how the quality of their learning and the proficiency level they achieve can be raised. While it makes reference to the author's report of 2008/2010[3], this document has been produced as an independent project, not simply an update of the earlier one. It recognises the gains made since 2008 and seeks to build on them.

Information contained in the document is based on:

(i) facts and figures supplied in mid to late 2015 by the Australian State and Territory Government Departments of Education and Boards of Study / Curriculum and Assessment

[3] Jane Orton, ***Chinese Language Education in Australian Schools*** (first edition, 2008); the third edition was renamed *The Current State of Chinese Language Education in Australian Schools*, The University of Melbourne and Asialink, Melbourne, 2010; it can be downloaded from <http://education.unimelb.edu.au/cttc/research/publications>.

Authorities, Catholic Education Offices and Associations of Independent Schools; combined with

(ii) data published in various documents cited; and

(iii) telephone, email and face-to-face conversations with more than 90 relevant people, including senior officers in all Departments of Education, state and national branch presidents of the Chinese Language Teachers Association, executives and members of the Australian Federation of Modern Languages, Hanban representatives, Confucius Institute directors, language policy experts, teacher educators, teachers and government and business representatives (see Appendix B).

The first chapter of the report provides a snapshot of the findings and recommendations of the 2008 report and the action undertaken following its publication. Chapter 2 discusses the factors involved in Chinese language policy. Chapter 3 presents the current state of Chinese language provision in Australian schools. Chapters 4 and 5, respectively, set out and discuss the two fundamental factors which contribute to failure in Chinese language teaching and learning. The final chapter presents development proposals. The report concludes with appendices comprising the tables of provision and participation figures provided by the various education systems and assessment bodies and other documentation referred to in the report.

3. CAVEAT

Education in Australia is principally a state matter. The government and Catholic education systems and the independent schools group, state and territory by state and territory, keep different types of statistics on their schools, programs, teachers and students, so even though figures were readily made available for this report, the data needed to make even simple aggregations and comparisons nationally often do not exist.

The data that educational authorities have available are, variously, from 2013, 2014 and 2015. As a result, the figures discussed in the first chapters are indicative only. Unless otherwise noted, however,

it is estimated that the actual 2015 figures are unlikely to vary from these by more than a small percentage and will make no difference to the overall thrust of the information.

For reference, the exact figures provided by the various state and territory sectors are presented in the series of tables and charts in Appendix A. These include additional data provided late in 2015, which may mean there are small discrepancies between totals presented here and figures presented in the ACRI Factsheet published in October 2015.

4. AUTHOR

Jane Orton, PhD was Director of the Chinese Teacher Training Centre at the University of Melbourne from 2009 to 2015, prior to which she coordinated Modern Languages Education at the Melbourne Graduate School of Education for 20 years. Jane Orton is an internationally recognised leader on the teaching and learning of Chinese and has published widely in the field, including *The Current State of Chinese Language Education in Australian Schools* (third edition, The University of Melbourne and Asialink, Melbourne, 2010) and most recently, 'Chinese Language Education: Teacher Training' in Chan Sin-Wai (ed.) *The Routledge Encyclopedia of the Chinese Language*, pp 104-118, Abingdon, Oxford: Routledge, 2016.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

FINDINGS

Provision

- Since 2008 the number of students learning Chinese in Australian schools has doubled to 172,832, which is 4.7 percent of total school student numbers; expansion has occurred nationally, although not uniformly; half of all students of Chinese live in Victoria; there is generally widespread minimum provision everywhere, with gaps being filled by government and community weekend classes and courses offered in distance mode; there is an adequate supply of trained teachers except in remote areas, where technology is often used to provide lessons.

- The expansion is largely the result of funding through the federal government National Asian Languages and Studies in Schools Program (NALSSP) from 2009 to 2011, which supported the introduction of new primary and secondary Asian language programs in all jurisdictions (government, Catholic and independent) in Western Australia, Northern Territory, Tasmania and the ACT and the expansion of existing programs in the other states; expansion has also been assisted by the mandating of language study from F to Year 10 in Victoria in 2012, which has doubled the number of primary learners of Chinese there in the last two years. This growth accounts for 25 percent of the total increase in Chinese learners nationally since 2008.

- Much support to teaching and learning has been added in the way of resources, especially online material and extracurricular activities; virtually all students have the opportunity to travel to China and be embedded in Chinese society, receive Chinese students in their own school and home and maintain links with sister school buddies electronically.

- In 2015 the United States President, Barack Obama, established the goal of one million young Chinese speakers in American schools;[4] achieving this goal is the task of the 100,000 Strong Foundation, a bipartisan non-profit organisation that has been endorsed by the US and Chinese governments; to this end they have set up hundreds of well-supported bilingual programs and plan hundreds more; Australia has only five poorly-supported programs of this type.

- Thus, noticeably missing in provision in Australia is any path for those who would develop superior competence at school as the essential preparation for becoming a specialist Sinologist.

Teachers and Administration

- Teachers of Chinese as a Second Language (L2) receive generic language teacher training but remain largely untrained in teaching the specific challenges of the language; teachers of Chinese as a First Language (L1) to home speakers and international students are not trained for their task at all; the lack of solid teacher training has a strong negative impact on the quality of teaching and learning outcomes.

- Retention once the language is no longer compulsory is a major problem in almost all programs and especially at the transition points between primary and secondary and Years 9 and 10. There is little or no accountability within school systems or individual schools for the poor retention of students.

- Most school sector staff who recommend and implement decisions about the teaching of Chinese in schools know little of what needs to be considered if their actions are to lead to success; the proposals for action by expert speakers of Chinese in universities and public office are generally based on linguistic knowledge and experience teaching the language in tertiary settings; most offer little in the way of contemporary learning theories to support their proposals or appropriate educational theories in which to frame them.

[4] <http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/obama-wants-1-million-americans-learning-chinese-by-2020/article/2572865>

Students

- Year 12 numbers taking Chinese vary from state to state and year to year, with a rise in L1 students but only a small rise in the total number of local students of any kind taking the subject and an overall drop over the past eight years of some 20 percent in the number of classroom learners taking L2 Chinese to around just 400; senior classes in some long-running L2 Chinese programs have been decimated; this is largely due to the presence of crushing numbers of home speaker learners being assessed as L2, who fill the high score quotas.

- Students who speak Chinese at home usually enroll in the lowest level in order to get high marks; this does little to develop their accurate but often limited language skills and does nothing to assist them in constructing a rich and stable bilingual, bicultural identity.

- Students who want to learn Chinese often have great difficulty being able to continue an appropriate course of study without interruption (for example, not being placed with beginners when they move to a secondary school after some years of Chinese language at primary school) and in finding it an intellectually satisfying, well-taught experience.

The Future

- To create deep and lasting relationships at all levels of Australian and Chinese society and for better mutual co-existence, Australia needs many more people with Chinese language skills than it currently has.

- To reap the benefits of the recent expansion in terms of building language competence at various levels across the workforce, the task now is to consolidate efforts and ensure more students continue with the language through to the end of their schooling and reach a higher standard than has so far been the norm. To achieve this, some serious weaknesses in the administration and teaching of Chinese need to be addressed.

Administrative Weaknesses

- There is no consensus on the preeminent importance of developing Chinese competence across the country and no national project to assist this development.

- There is wide evidence of programs and initiatives begun with little or no understanding of the critical factors involved in the teaching and learning of Chinese; as a result, funds are not always spent as fruitfully as they might be and initiatives are often not nearly as productive as they might be while many programs simply peter out.

- There is little integration of initiatives in Chinese language learning even within individual states, let alone nationally.

- There needs to be greater active encouragement for schools to establish more productive programs providing intensive learning opportunities in terms of frequency per week (three to five one-hour lessons) and immersion style (mostly no English).

Teaching Weaknesses

- Most teachers of Chinese in Australia grew up in an education system very different to the one they now teach in. Not surprisingly, many have difficulties in adapting to local norms in pedagogy and classroom management.

- Difficulties due to the different educational culture the teachers were raised in are compounded by factors such as the common insensitivities of teachers when teaching their own language, the lack of research and research-informed resources to tackle the challenges of Chinese, and the lack of training available in teaching the special features of Chinese.

- Many of these matters are outside the control of individual teachers, but certain very common pedagogical practices and professional attitudes among L1 speaking teachers of Chinese are matters within their powers to change and need to change

in line with Australian professional standards if Australian students of the language are to progress. Key among these are the lack of reflective practices which consolidate learning and lead students to a deeper intellectual appreciation of the nature of language and the meaning of their own growing bilingual competence, and in primary programs, the presentation of vocabulary-laden chunks of language (colours, numbers, domestic animals, school subjects, song lyrics) with little development of language control.

- Resources are not tailored to the Australian context and are often in contradiction to the principles of the Australian Curriculum for Languages.

Recommendations[5]

1. Improve retention and quality for learners in all streams:

   - Create an acceptable form of wording that will make Chinese as a Second Language in Years 11 and 12 legally accessible only to classroom learners, thus allowing them the potential to achieve a high score in Year 12 assessment by competing only with genuine L2 learners;

   - Provide L1 and home speaker learners with quality courses to develop their Chinese for the benefit of themselves and the country.

2. Develop a cohort of local high school graduates from among home speakers and classroom learners who are super-proficient in Chinese to serve national security and development needs:

   - Establish a small, national network of bilingual primary and secondary programs;

[5] Costs for the proposed initiatives are provided in Chapter 6

- Set up a small, appropriately expert Chinese language education centre to provide professional support to the bilingual network, largely online.

3. Improve the quality of teachers and the number of L2 speaking teachers:

   - In conjunction with university Faculties of Education, test all Chinese language teacher candidates in English and Chinese and offer an incentive to non-background speakers with sufficient proficiency to train as teachers of the language;

   - Provide pre- and post-service teachers with dedicated training in Chinese language teaching – a first and second stage certificate, taught nationally online;

   - Introduce a teacher training certificate for those teaching L1 and home speaker levels.

4. Establish publicly what can be achieved by students at each level:

   - Introduce a national test for students created in alignment with the Australian Curriculum for Chinese to provide a national benchmark which will permit teachers and students, school leaders and parents to see what can be done, and what their program achieves in comparison to what can be done.

5. Create language learning resources appropriate to Australian schools:

   - Develop new resources aligned with the perspectives of the Australian Curriculum, which teach not only linguistic items but also develop students' intellectual capability, bilingual perspective and capacity to mediate between two languages.

6. Monitor the progress of Chinese learning nationally.

Chapter 1

2008 to 2015: the Goal and the Gap

The report *Chinese Language Education in Australian Schools* (CLEAS) was first published in 2008. It was written in response to the then Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd, calling for 12 percent of Australian school graduates in the year 2020 to be fluent in an Asian language – Chinese, Japanese, Indonesian or Korean.

In the announcement and subsequent National Asian Languages and Studies in Schools Program (NALSSP) funding, no mention was made of how the 12 percent might be distributed across the languages but the CLEAS report proposed that of the 24,000 students who constituted 12 percent of the nominated cohort (who were just starting school that year), 8,000 might be a fair proportion to have speaking Chinese. On 2007 figures, some 4,500 students had taken Year 12 Chinese, of whom 4,000 were Chinese home speakers (local and international) and a maximum of 500 were non-Chinese background second language (L2) learners. The new target would thus appear to mean that the number of students taking Year 12 Chinese would need to double. However, as virtually all students who spoke Chinese at home were already taking Chinese in Year 12, any increase would have to come from the non-background learner group. While at the start of secondary school there were sufficient non-background students to supply the new 4,000 needed, 94 percent were likely to have dropped out by Year 12, leaving only 500 still taking Chinese in their graduating year. Hence, to meet the Prime Minister's target, it would, in fact, be necessary to increase retention of *eight times* the then current number of non-background students.

The report identified three primary causes for the dropout rate of non-Chinese background students:

1. The presence of strong numbers of first language speakers, locally born or otherwise, who shared their classes and overwhelmed them in assessment tasks and scores;

2. Their lack of success in developing proficiency due to the intrinsic difficulties of Chinese for an English speaking learner combined with inappropriate teaching approaches and a totally inadequate provision of time needed for the task;

3. An often unsupportive learning environment at school, in their family and in the community.

The report also advocated that while they caused the classroom learners much grief, local home speaker students and international students with Chinese as a first language (L1) should be particularly nurtured in their own right as they comprised a valuable future pool of professionals, including teacher candidates, who were bilingual, bicultural and familiar with Australian society, schools, relationships and learning styles.

CLEAS Proposals

The CLEAS report found that to achieve the eightfold retention rate, five main developments were necessary:

1. Students who spoke Chinese at home should be taught and assessed separately from students who learned the language only in a classroom;

2. A separate curriculum and assessment framework should be developed for students entering Australian schools in primary who spoke Chinese at home while a further curriculum and assessment framework should be maintained for those who spoke Chinese at home who entered Australian schools in their secondary years;

3. Concerted, sound research into pedagogy for Chinese should be undertaken as an urgent need and more quality time on task should be provided;

4. Professional education programs for both pre- and in-service teachers to develop expertise in helping students meet the learning challenges of Chinese should be offered regularly;

5. School staff, parents and community members should be helped to better appreciate the task of learning Chinese, its value for the individual and the country and to discover how they might assist in its success.

2008 Recommendations

To achieve these goals the CLEAS report made the following recommendations:

1. **Administrative action be initiated to:**

    1.1. Create three streams of Chinese learning that are officially recognised nationally and provided for in Chinese language assessment;

    1.2. Extend time spent on Chinese in all programs through increased allocation of hours, use of digital resources and opportunities beyond the classroom to hear and use the language;

    1.3. Ensure Chinese classes at primary level are language focused, are allocated appropriate time per week and lead to continuing development;

    1.4. Initiate innovative programs which permit concentrated periods of time to be spent on the language;

    1.5. Undertake research to understand the task better and to develop standards of language proficiency and pedagogy for teachers of Chinese;

    1.6. Undertake a survey of teachers of Chinese already available in Australia and the graduate flow likely in the foreseeable future; develop recruitment plans based on these data.

2. **An Australian Centre for Chinese Language Education be established to initiate, influence and disseminate developments in:**

    2.1. Public Thinking: persistent, long-term advocacy and protection of developments in recognising national strategic needs, changing language attitudes,

understanding the difficulty of Chinese and length of time needed for success and knowing how those around the learner might help;

2.2. Teacher education: pre- and in- service content, targeting known difficulties;

2.3. Teaching resources: targeted resource development of scaffolded practice material, using electronic media;

2.4. Innovative practice and research: promoting, monitoring and disseminating new approaches to Chinese teaching and learning and identifying gaps in understanding and provision.

Outcomes 2008 to 2015

The findings of the report were well received by Federal and State Education bodies and, for the most part, the recommendations were implemented or at least tackled:

- The Australian Curriculum for Languages: Chinese (ACARA, 2015) was developed, which presents full language curricula from Foundation to Year 10, with the secondary curriculum divided into three separate streams: L1 learners, Background learners and L2 learners; guidelines for allocation to each stream are provided;

- The Curriculum stipulates 350 hours of language study in primary school, equivalent to one 65-minute lesson (or two 32.5-minute lessons) a week over seven years (or more time weekly if over fewer years) with the starting point left open; 350 hours in Years 7 to 10 (equivalent to 144 minutes / three 48-minute lessons per week);

- New South Wales established a separate Heritage (home speaker background) secondary stream of study in Years 11 and 12;

- Through the NALSSP Program from 2010 to 2012, considerable Federal funding was spent on developing online resources to give students the chance to spend more time learning the language outside school time in a range of language levels and activity types, and a single principal website where they are available to teachers and students (The Language Learning Space: www.lls.edu.au) was opened;

- A variety of changes were made by various bodies that have led to gradually tighter rules for acceptance into teacher education courses, especially in some institutions, and to higher standards of English language competence for international teacher candidates; in some institutions at least, this has impacted on the earlier ease with which international students could be trained as teachers of Chinese and has resulted in considerably fewer but more suitable candidates graduating;

- The Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (now DET) established the Chinese Teacher Training Centre (CTTC) as part of its newly formed relationship with the Chinese Government's Hanban Office; located at the Melbourne Graduate School of Education, the Centre was set up to be a national resource tasked with fulfilling Recommendation 2 of the CLEAS report; following discontinuation of the Federal NALSSP program, budget cuts to Education and launch of the $13 million Victorian Young Leaders to China program, CTTC funding was not continued after fulfillment of the initial five-year contract; in that time, 2,500 participant places were filled in CTTC half-day professional development sessions on pedagogy, using ICT and more research-grounded practice; the CTTC created a suite of new resources designed to target teaching weaknesses and to provide students with more time working on the language and doing so in intellectually engaging ways; the CTTC undertook research projects that elaborated guidelines for successful in-country sojourns, revealed the diversity in actual programs offered, identified the attributes of good learners of Chinese and of quality, sustainable programs and documented the nature and extent of ICT use in teaching

Chinese and teachers' professional development needs in that area;[6]

- Victoria has introduced its Young Leaders to China intensive language and cultural experience program in which, over a period of five years, 1,500 Year 9 students of Chinese are being sent to China for six weeks of immersion (that is, no English) language experience;

- In all states, a great many new programs have been set up in government, Catholic and independent primary and secondary schools, most very similar to those already running; in Victoria in particular, due to the introduction of mandatory language programs in primary schools, there has been an enormous surge in the number of primary students learning Chinese, from 10,000 to 40,000 in the years 2008 to 2015;

- A few primary programs in each state are experimenting with immersion style teaching, often using a gesture-based approach such as AIM[7] and / or using CLIL, where the language is learned in a subject from the general curriculum such as Science, but taught in Chinese; in Victoria, one secondary school established a bilingual program teaching Science and Social Studies exclusively in Chinese to allow primary bilingual learners to continue to develop the language.

Yet ...

Despite these advances, there has not been the desired increase in student numbers in Year 12 Chinese. In fact, the number of non-background students taking Year 12 Chinese has actually *decreased* since 2008. There is also evidence that more than half of those who begin Chinese in primary do not continue it in secondary if they have a choice to opt out.

6 CTTC research reports and resources can be downloaded from <www.unimelb.edu.au/cttc/publications>.

7 Accelerated Integrative Method, developed for primary French in Canada by Wendy Maxwell, adapted for Chinese under licence to Hearsay Learning in Melbourne: <http://www.aimanz.com/>.

Reasons

- Despite recognising its severe adverse effect on non-background students continuing to senior years, the teaching and assessing of classroom learners alongside and in competition with home speakers has continued;

- Educated only in generic language teaching methods, virtually nowhere in Australia are teachers of Chinese actually trained to teach those aspects of the language that constitute the greatest difficulties for each of the different categories of learners and as a result the language is not well taught;

- The special requirements for learning Chinese successfully are unknown to, or ignored by, those who administer courses in the language, set up school programs and train teachers;

- There is no vision or national goal shared among those involved in the provision of Chinese language education, nor common understanding of the complexities of the task or shared knowledge of the strategies and practices that would achieve successful outcomes;

- Efforts to improve outcomes are sporadic, uncoordinated and often designed in ignorance of much that is relevant to success; most initiatives are funded for too short a term to have more than a sparkler effect.

Chapter 2

Policy: a Language of Unique Significance

> ... Money talks. Capitalism is a unifying global language, the pursuit of profit and the relentless search for new markets. [...] Certainly, rich Australian miners haven't been stymied by any language barriers in helping turn China into Australia's largest market.[8]

Around the world English is the language of international business, sport and tourism, the common language of heads of state and journalists and the first choice of most students and their parents. Hence, the default view of most Australian government and business people for a very long time was that English is the only language needed by Australians and this was often accompanied by the rider that there were plenty of bilingual Chinese Australians around who could do any interpreting required.

Both these points stem from an essentially colonial view based on the assumption of a relationship in which the other is seeking information, or a link the other wants, that is available only through English. But this is no longer the case and will not always be the case in future relationships, where it may often be the native English speakers who are seeking information or connection that is vital to them.

Relying only on what people can or choose to tell them in English, or put into English for them to read, leaves English speakers in a passive position in any relationship in which information is of importance. Furthermore, while English might be the language of international business at present, not all the Chinese that Australians may want to reach can operate comfortably in English, and, as China's power grows, not all may want to: *Our goal is to replace English with Chinese as an international language as soon as possible*, wrote China Central Television Forum participant Number 144.[9] It was a view held by many others who wrote in. The head of China's National Office for the Teaching and Learning of Chinese Abroad (*Hanban*), who has vice-ministerial status, has assiduously followed General Secretary and President Hu Jintao's 2006 directive to speed up the promotion

[8] Daniel Flitton, 'Money talks in any language. Comprendo?', *The Age*, May 24 2013.

[9] CCTV Forum: 术有专攻,不能让英语教育成为民族复兴制约, [Skills should be specialised. We cannot let English education hold back the national renaissance] October 5 2007. Retrieved 8 December 2007 from <http://fuxing.bbs.cctv.com/viewthread.php?tid=11191583&extra=page%3D7>.

of the Chinese language internationally by implementing the '11th Five-Year Plan for Chinese Language to go Abroad'[10] through its Confucius Institutes, direct grants and a substantial program sending assistant teachers all over the world. Certainly the governments and businesses of South Korea, Japan, Thailand and India are taking this prospect seriously and are systematically training huge sectors of their already English-speaking workforce to be proficient in Chinese.

The second option, that is, depending on Chinese Australians to do any interpreting needed, blithely overlooks the fact that relying on someone else to gather information or represent your interests and views is quite hampering. It is also risky. No matter how technically competent, how loyal, or how well-intentioned the other person may be, they do not have your experience, your understanding, or your capacity for judgement, and may not always know or recognise your interests. Translating is also cumbersome. Except for routine statements, communicating through translators, human or technical, even at its best, is tedious and limiting: no quick responses, no nuances, no jokes permitted. It tends to curtail exploration of possibilities and makes it difficult to build the intimate relationships based on mutual understanding and trust needed to develop new paths of cooperation.

Even those promoting greater involvement by Asian diaspora communities are quick to acknowledge that:

> Although English is a global language, being monolingual in English will impede Australia's ability to engage more effectively with the region. ... smart engagement with Asia requires breaking 'the vicious circle of monolingualism'.[11]

The power in developing relationships

The essential point of language skills is their power in developing relationships of more than superficial depth and the independent access they give to information, some of which is not otherwise

[10] Minjian Ruan - quanli Jianshe [China needs to promote true construction of civil soft power], *Chinese News Net*, March 22 2006; "Hanyu jiasu 'zouchuqu': Kongzi xueyuan jinnian jiangda 200suo" [*Chinese language speeds up* 'go abroad'].

[11] Ien Ang, Yasmin Tambiah and Phillip Mar, *Smart engagement with Asia: Leveraging language, research and culture*, p. 16. Australian Council of Learned Academies, 2015, <http://www.acola.org.au>.

available. As Neil Thomas wrote in response to Daniel Flitton's article quoted from at the beginning of this chapter:

> Understanding the cultures and speaking the languages of Asia is key to ensuring Australia's long-term economic success, as business would flourish with amplified people-to-people engagement, intergovernmental trust, and strategic involvement in the region.
>
> This is especially so within the dynamic non-primary sectors Australia needs to develop, where success is based far more upon networks and interactions than mineral deposits.[12]

The nature and value of the relationships was elaborated by former Australian Ambassador to China, Stephen FitzGerald, in his 2014 speech marking the fortieth anniversary of diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China:

> [They] will be important for giving stability and sustainability to over-arching dialogue and summitry. But it's also essential for developing connections and friendships that will enable us to talk easily and at will with many people, and begin to think about China in a more rounded, less Anglo-centric and, dare I say, more human way. This is not just for politicians but for public servants and advisers and staffers, and the flotilla of interest groups that hangs around the foreign relations process. Not everyone, of course [...] But there have to be enough.
>
> ... [I]magining China in this way, and engaging through many channels and at many levels, will help us in getting towards the access and clarity of voice we need. That's what a mature relationship would look like.[13]

FitzGerald also noted and lamented the lack in development of relationships of this depth and breadth to date:

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12 Neil Thomas, 'Asian White Paper or white elephant?', *The Drum,* August 28 2013, <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2013-08-28/thomas-asian-white-paper-or-white-elephant/4917896>.

13 Stephen FitzGerald. *Australia and China at Forty: Stretch of the Imagination,* p. 28. Australian National University, Canberra, ACT, 2014.

> By and large, however, the Australian political class has not developed extensive personal networks in different centres of power in China and with people on the way up – government, party, military, business, writers, social researchers, public intellectuals, think tankers, policy wonks, whatever. We have to attend to this.[14]

National Security

Beyond the rationale from economic and cultural perspectives for the development of language skills more broadly across the Australian population lies the even finer layer of national security – political, diplomatic and commercial. Australia needs to able to source and judge essential information from around the globe on its own behalf, including information concerning China, often written or spoken in Chinese only. Appreciative of this point, the United States Department of Defense has stepped in to foster the development of high level language skills which it needs in people

> ... to translate documents, including website material, to monitor Internet communications and media; to interpret spoken language at high level meetings; and to represent our interests in public and private forums.[15]

In the United Kingdom, the British Academy published a report in 2013 pointing out the urgent need to develop high level language skills for the fields of diplomacy, international relations and security.[16]

Australia's needs are no different and this level of expertise must also be fostered here. It requires a high proficiency in language to be complemented by

> ... our centres of Chinese Studies to be training more Sinologists who think strategically, think about Australia-China relations,

[14] *Ibid.*

[15] USA Department of Defense, 2005, *Defense language transformation roadmap,* retrieved June 1 2015 from <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/policy/dod/d20050330roadmap.pdf>.

[16] Selina Chen and Anne Breivik, *Lost for Words: The Need for Languages in UK Diplomacy and Security,* The British Academy for the Humanities and Social Sciences, London, 2013.

> think about China's relations with the world, so that in future, institutions like the ONA [Office of National Assessment] or the Lowy Institute no longer lack a ready supply of China specialists with the mix of qualities and qualifications they require.[17]

In short, as Robert Menzies put it in his inaugural speech as Prime Minister in 1939: *Australia must regard herself as a principal, providing herself with her own information [on the near north].*[18]

A Shift in Perception

There is considerable bipartisan consensus on the view that Australia finds itself increasingly needing to communicate, cooperate, collaborate and compete in a globalised, China-engaged world.[19] There is also broad consensus that to build a strong, loyal, clientele which is being competently served, Australians in business need to be informed of clients' needs and preferences, of the social and political environment in which clients live and operate, and be able to discern trends early. It remains a novel idea, however, for most native English speakers that, while having English as mother tongue is a huge advantage, knowing it only is a disadvantage. But most who promote the learning of Chinese in Australia do so from a pragmatic base, mindful of David Graddol's warning in his 2006 report for the British Council that 'monolingual English speakers face a bleak economic future'.[20] Cultural knowledge and linguistic skills provide the base for gaining the information necessary to make sound judgements and, hence, to survive and flourish, not only for major companies but for small businesses, shops, hospitality organisations and cultural bodies, all of which increasingly need to have English-Chinese bilingual capacity and be interculturally knowledgeable.

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17 Stephen FitzGerald, *Australia and China at Forty Stretch of the Imagination*, p. 60, Australian National University, Canberra, ACT, 2014.

18 Robert Menzies, Ministry's Policy, Broadcast on national radio April 26 1939, reported in *The Sydney Morning Herald*, April 27 1939, p.9.

19 See for example: <http://electionspeeches.moadoph.gov.au/speeches/2007-kevin-rudd>; <www.news.com.au/national/asian-language-should-be-mandatory-for-australian-schoolchildren-julie-bishop-says/story-e6frfkvr-1226207249844>; <http://ministers.education.gov.au/pyne/opening-address-adelaide-language-festival>; <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-05-12/nsw-labor-mp-chris-minns-mandatory-chinese-lessons-in-schools/6464718>.

20 David Graddol, *English Next,* p. 6. The British Council, London, 2006.

Promoting the learning of Asian languages in Australia has been government policy at least since publication of the Auchmuty Report commissioned in 1970 by the then Minister of Education, Malcolm Fraser.[21] That report, and those that have followed every decade since, nominated Chinese and Japanese as priority Asian languages, while Indonesian and Korean, and more recently, Hindi, have been added over time.

Despite their apparent similarities, in the latest of these reports, the 2012 Australian Government's *Australia in the Asian Century*,[22] and in the statements of the then Prime Minister and business leaders from that time, a shift is perceptible in how English-Chinese bilingualism is envisaged. Chinese language skills are no longer just convenient for transactional use in a sales exchange or to manage the pleasantries at a banquet, but are regarded as part of the basic skills set of any twenty-first century person, and the means of *creating a relationship*: getting to know our neighbours, developing deeper person-to-person ties that are intended to last and making a positive impact that will be persuasive – for which understanding how Chinese think is essential. Thus, in his Reply to the Budget statement for 2012, then Federal Opposition Leader, Tony Abbott, spoke of bilingualism as 'urgently' needed for us 'to make our way in the world'[23] and the *Australia in the Asian Century* White Paper declares:

> The capacity for Australians to build deeper ties with Asia will be hampered if there is not an increase in proficiency of languages other than English. Relying on the language capabilities of Asian-Australians for all of Australia's relationships and engagement will not be adequate. Proficiency in more than one language is a basic skill of the 21st century.[24]

Members of the Business Council of Australia have also revised their earlier views on the optional value of language skills: in 2012, when the NALSSP grant scheme finished, the Council came out publicly in favour of business supporting greater federal funding for teaching

21 The Commonwealth Advisory Committee, *The teaching of Asian languages and cultures in Australia* (The Auchmuty Report), AGPS, Canberra, ACT, 1970.
22 Australian Government, *Australia in the Asian Century*, AG, Canberra, ACT, 2012.
23 <http://australianpolitics.com/2012/05/10/abbott-budget-reply-speech.html>.
24 Australian Government. *Australia in the Asian Century*, p. 170. AG, Canberra, ACT, 2012.

Asian languages and cultures in order to 'strengthen our ability to engage'.[25]

Implementation

Based on extensive international research over decades, state Departments of Education propose that language learning belongs in the school curriculum because it is an educational process: becoming bilingual develops an individual's capacity to bear uncertainty, think laterally and tolerate difference.[26] These are essential attributes for successfully participating in the modern world and they can accrue from the learning of any second language. In Australia, the specific languages taught in schools are chosen for their additional social benefits: to maintain immigrant children's links to their heritage, Australia's links to countries of historical significance and to spread knowledge of cultures of world importance. Certain languages are also valued because they are spoken in regional countries of economic significance.

Chinese scores three times as many of these benefit points as any other language offered in Australian schools – historic links, cultural value, local population, economic and political regional significance, world power, frequency of interaction – and these connections are likely to increase. Australia's multilingual capacities are recognised as valuable and worth maintaining and it is not being suggested here that other languages should not be taught. However, on the basis of the recognised values of languages, Chinese must be seen as more than just one viable option among many languages within education: it should be seen as our first 'priority language'. As such, it is proposed, a certain proportion of the population should learn it. The 2008 CLEAS report suggested one third of Prime Minister Rudd's nominated 12 percent of students with Asian language competence might be taught Chinese. That is four percent of the total student cohort, which leaves 96 percent of students available to learn other

[25] Business Council of Australia press release, 4 June 2012. <http://www.bca.com.au/newsroom/investment-in-asian-learning-will-strengthen-our-ability-to-engage-with-asia>.

[26] See for example the American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Languages, *What the Research Shows*, <http://www.actfl.org/advocacy/what-the-research-shows>.

languages – a ratio that could still be reduced considerably without constituting total annexation of the clientele.

While Departments of Education are not blind to national needs, they centre their efforts and dwindling resources on providing mass education for their state's children. Departments are required to leave it to individual schools to choose the particular languages they offer. Nationally the numbers learning Chinese have been well below those of any of the other languages commonly offered, although due to funding from NALSSP grants and China's growing importance, there has been an increase over the past six years in start-up Chinese language programs, especially in primary schools, as well as growth in international students from China. This has meant the published figures show apparently healthy increases in the number of students taking Chinese. But there is no 'Project Chinese', so there is no monitoring of the number of genuine classroom learners among the starters or the number of these who continue from year to year and from primary to secondary. As a result, within states and across the nation, it is extremely difficult to know how many students are continuing or are simply being replaced by beginners or internationals, or at what stage those who quit do so.

Apart from the stimulus of NALSSP funding, the impetus to establish new Chinese programs has often come from principals who have been on Chinese government-funded educational tours of China, where they have been galvanised by the vigour of life on the streets and the intensity of student learning in schools. Returning home, they move to introduce Chinese with an enthusiasm often matched by that of parents who are motivated by both practical concerns about their child's economic future and an appreciation of Chinese cultural wealth. Conversations with students[27] reveal that though they may find lessons dull at times, many greatly enjoy engaging with the language and are prepared to put in considerable time memorising characters and vocabulary. Students who do continue learning Chinese are broadly representative of the community including some who are already able to speak a language other than English.

[27] Claudia Prescott and Jane Orton, *Good Learners of Chinese – profiles of secondary students,* CTTC, The University of Melbourne, Melbourne, 2012.

There remains a tension between the growing appreciation by governments and business of the need for broad Chinese language skills across the population and the determination of Departments of Education not to privilege any one language among the wide range available for schools to offer. These demands need not be antagonistic. The value in studying other languages is not being contested here. What is being advocated is a sense of urgency and a sense of accountability to improve retention rates and the level of proficiency attained in existing Chinese programs. To achieve this poses a number of complex intertwined challenges. Despite efforts to inform them and to urge them to act, Australian leaders in education have yet to demonstrate a sustained, concerted effort to acknowledge the challenges, appreciate their dynamic interrelationships and begin to tackle the cluster of factors in a coherent way. The two main sets of factors which would need to be considered are demographic issues of the learners and the nature of Chinese language. These challenges are addressed, respectively, in Chapters 4 and 5 of this report, following a detailed discussion of current provision in Chapter 3.

Chapter 3
Current Provision

Students

In 2015 there were 3,694,101 students attending school in Australia.[28] Data provided by all sectors in all states and territories for this report indicated that 172,878 (4.7 percent) of them were learning Chinese (Table A). This means that the overall number of students of Chinese from all backgrounds and year levels has doubled in the past eight years. There is no breakdown of figures into international students, local home speakers and classroom learners, so there is no easy way to tell the source and nature of the increase. By Year 12, however, only 4,149 (2.4 percent of the Chinese learners, 0.1 percent of the total student cohort) are still studying Chinese and of those, only an estimated 400 are not of Chinese background, a 20 percent drop from 500 in 2007.

Foundation to Year 10

Federal funding through NALSSP grants from 2009 to 2011 encouraged considerable expansion in the number of Chinese programs nationally. Primary school figures in all states and all sectors increased and in many cases the increases were substantial (Table B). In secondary schools, the trend is the reverse.

States and sectors keep different levels of detail on figures of growth and decline in Chinese. Among significant shifts evident in the information available, in Victoria, where a Liberal Government introduced compulsory language study in schools, the number of students of Chinese in government schools from Foundation (F) to Year 6 jumped from 19,000 to 40,000 between 2013 and 2015 – which equates to about 25 percent of all primary students in the State; enrolments in Chinese in independent schools from Year 7 to Year 12 dropped by 74 percent, while enrolments in Catholic schools from Year 7 to Year 12 dropped by 93 percent. In New South Wales, detailed figures show some 4,067 students in Year 7 in government schools, half that number in Year 8 and only one fifth that number (585) in Year 9. As many students only begin Chinese in Year 7, this shows a massive, steady dropout from the start. The trend is supported by anecdotal evidence of even schools with strong primary Chinese programs being unable to carry more than 37 to 40 percent of students

[28] Bureau of Statistics, <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/4221.0>.

into secondary Chinese, unless continuing study of the language is mandated.

TABLE A: NUMBER OF SCHOOLS OFFERING CHINESE AND NUMBER OF STUDENTS LEARNING CHINESE IN AUSTRALIA IN 2008 AND 2015 BY STATE / TERRITORY AND SCHOOL SECTOR

State / Territory	School sector	Number of schools		Number of students (primary + secondary)	
		2008	2015	2008	2015
Australian Capital Territory	GOVT	12 (2008)	17 (2014)	625 (2008)	1,746 (2015)
	IND	1 (2008)	8 (2015)	No data	No data
	CATH	No data	2 (2014)	No data	50 (2014)
New South Wales	GOVT	No data	162 (2014)	18,532 (2005)	28,610 (2014)
	IND	15 (2008)	40 (2015)	4,279 (2008)	No data
	CATH	No data	10 (2015)	1,325 (2007)	No data
Northern Territory	GOVT	1 (2008)	15 (2015)	602 (2008)	516 (2015)
	IND	0 (2008)	2 (2015)	0 (2008)	116 (2015)
	CATH	0 (2008)	0 (2015)	0 (2008)	0 (2015)
Queensland	GOVT	No data	137 (2015)	No data	23,904 (2015)
	IND	41 (2007)	53 (2014)	7,021 (2007)	9,201 (2014)
	CATH	11 (2008)	12 (2015)	1,994 (2008)	1,892 (2015)
South Australia	GOVT	38 (2007)	40 (2015)	5,586 (2007)	6,394 (2015)
	IND	22 (2008)	17 (2015)	3,547 (2007)	No data
	CATH	6 (2008)	22 (2014)	No data	3,214 (2014)
Tasmania	GOVT	11 (2007)	31 (2015)	528 (2007)	2,318 (2015)
	IND	1 (2008)	8 (2013)	No data	930 (2013)
	CATH	0 (2008)	2 (2015)	0 (2008)	253 (2015)
Victoria	GOVT	88 (2008)	231 (2014)	15,603 (2006)	52,061 (2014)
	IND	42 (2008)	108 (2013)	12,251 (2008)	15,994 (2013)
	CATH	26 (2007)	59 (2015)	5,242 (2007)	10,980 (2015)

Western Australia	GOVT	12 (2008)	30 (2014)	No data	6,702 (2014)
	IND	No data	20 (2014)	318 (2008)	2,566 (2014)
	CATH	0 (2008)	8 (2014)	0 (2008)	935 (2014)
TOTAL		**319**	**1,030**	**90,740***	**172,878***

* The total number of students is not equal to the sum of the totals for the primary and secondary students since only partial data in some cases (for example, NSW Catholic and SA independent sectors) were provided. In the Queensland government sector only the figure for primary students is available. The total number of students for 2008 was available, but not the breakdown of primary and secondary student numbers.

TABLE B: NUMBER OF PRIMARY AND SECONDARY STUDENTS OF CHINESE IN EACH AUSTRALIAN STATE / TERRITORY IN 2008 AND 2015

State/ Territory + Primary / Secondary Configurations	Primary 2008	Primary 2015	Secondary 2008	Secondary 2015	Total 2008	Total 2015
ACT P = K-7 S = 8-12	46	1,048	579	548	625	1,796
NSW P = K-6 S = 7-12	17,197	24,340	5614	8,766	24,136	33,106
NT P = P-6 S = 7-12	500	471	102	161	602	632
QLD P = P-6 S = 7-12	19,327	25,542	2,975	9.568	9,015	34,997
SA P = R-7 S = 8-12	4,097	7,826	1,489	1,782	9,133	9,608
TAS P = P-6 S = 7-12	59	1,788	469	1,713	528	3,501
VIC P = P-6 S = 7-12	16,848	57,584	16,248	21,451	33,096	79,035
WA P = K-7 S = 8-12	210	7,909	108	2,294	318	10,203
TOTAL	**58,293**	**126,508**	**27,584**	**46,283**	**90,740**	**172,878**

TABLE C: NUMBER OF STUDENTS STUDYING YEAR 12 CHINESE

State/ Territory	Chinese Language Course	Number of students						
		2008	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
ACT	Beginning		40	32	48	36	62	53
	Intermediate		7	2	6	7	9	1
	Continuing	10	15	9	12	17	15	23
	Advanced		85	111	80	69	93	92
NSW	Background speakers [L1]	1077	1141	963	756	689	655	679
	Beginners	32	42	27	41	52	54	27
	Continuers	85	120	101	64	67	84	102
	Extension	31	37	31	13	18	26	24
	Heritage	N/A	N/A	N/A	90	94	121	127
NT	Background speakers [L1]	0	10	0	11	11	10	
	Beginners	0	0	3	3	7	14	
	Continuers	4	4	0	22	15	5	
QLD*	Chinese	439	445	523	544	567	626	
	Extension	N/A	N/A	0	0	0	0	
SA	Background speakers [L1]	385	329	241	185	143	141	
	Beginners	10	10	0	3	0	1	
	Continuers	87	93	87	52	69	53	
TAS**	Foundation (2014)/ 3B (2008)/ CHN215109 (2009-13)	16	21	6	9	12	14	
	Chinese (CHN315109)	11	18	35	21	29	29	
	Chinese (Specialist level) 5C	65	76	59	44	36	44	
	Chinese 4C (2008)	1	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
VIC	First Language		1,879	18,801	1,744	1,566	1,618	1,920
	Second Language		952	941	917	970	972	840
	Second Language Advanced		352	41	440	481	478	514

WA* **	Background speakers (called 'Advanced' in 2008) [L1]	56	38	54	67	62	52	
	Second Language (3BCSL)	12	28	38	49	49	26	
IB** **	Chinese A [L1]	133	112	123	109	154	108	157
	Chinese B [L2]	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	168	182	187

* There is only one Year 12 Chinese language course in the Queensland curriculum and it has been designed for second language learners. However, approved syllabuses are available for use by students who may be first or second language learners, or background or heritage speakers.

** TCE syllabuses are offered at Senior Secondary 2 (C, B, A), 3 (C, B, A), 4 (C, B, A), and 5 (C). A C syllabus is of 150 hours design time, a B syllabus of 100 hours, an A syllabus of 50 hours.

*** The 2014 Year 12 group in Western Australia was a half-cohort due to a change to a later school starting age for these (and subsequent) students

**** Students studying International Baccalaureate Chinese B may be home speakers of Chinese or classroom second language learners.

Year 12

Ahead in the total number of students learning Chinese, in 2014, the last year for which all state figures are available, Victoria had just under four times as many candidates in Year 12 Chinese as any other state, with solid increases of L1 and Advanced L2 students in recent years (Table C). Victoria's numbers taking L2 Chinese in Year 12, however, have dropped 14 percent since 2007, the biggest drop occurring between 2014 and 2015. Although official figures are not kept on the background of the L2 students, teachers' reports to their Association reveal a big drop in non-background learners continuing to Year 12, even in the longest running programs.

Secondary numbers are difficult to compare as some count from Year 7, others from Year 8, and not all data are available. Figures provided, however, show that across the states and territories, Year 12 students of Chinese constitute between 2.4 percent (WA, TAS) and 13 percent (VIC, NSW) of the total number of secondary students learning Chinese – although Victoria has nearly four times as many in total as NSW – with the percentage in NT also high (11 percent) and SA and QLD in the middle with around seven percent. These figures include the students from all streams: international L1 students, home speaking heritage learners and non-background classroom

learners. A number of students in the ACT may enrol in NSW, hence its percentage of Year 12 students is hard to discern.

Some states, such as NSW, offer a two-year Beginners course starting in Year 11. In Chinese this does not draw large numbers: in NSW there were just 27 in 2015, while there were 102 Continuers, that is, students who had begun the language in Year 7, or even earlier. By contrast, in the same year NSW had 654 students in Beginners Japanese, in addition to 662 Continuers, and 197 Continuers in Latin.

A number of schools have students who sit the International Baccalaureate (IB) instead of their state Certificate of Education / Higher School Certificate. In 2015, 185 Australian students were enrolled in the IB's Chinese as a Second Language course. They were all students who had completed the major part of their schooling in English, normally in Australia, and hence were enrolled in the L1 English course, but no data are available as to how many of the group were home speakers of Chinese and how many were classroom learners.

The larger states also provide an extensive language school program outside day school hours (after school or on Saturdays) as well as distance learning in Chinese. There are also numerous community colleges which teach the language on weekends, traditionally to home speakers although some now welcome classroom learners.

ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM

Sojourns

These days virtually all schools teaching Chinese have a sister school in China and many have more than one. These relationships vary considerably in nature and quality. In most cases visiting the sister school is part of a trip to China undertaken by Year 9 or 10 students or in one of the higher years in primary. The Chinese school's role is to provide some experience of the normal school day and a local student 'buddy' for each visiting student. The buddy and his or her family take care of the student for at least a whole weekend day and very often provide an overnight stay as well. This is almost always the highlight of the sojourn for the Australian students and does much to consolidate

their language, engage them in genuine intercultural experiences and deepen their motivation to continue learning Chinese. Some programs are richer than others and involve joint activities such as musical performances or sporting events which include students not learning Chinese. Schools where students have the opportunity to go on a trip more than once, even annually, and where the Chinese school also sends students to Australia, can lead to real friendships developing between buddies, although the differences in students' lifestyles often make deeper sharing of experience difficult, and there is little in the way of guidance provided in how to develop a relationship of mutual benefit and value. Another factor is that students move on and it is really the teachers and school leaders on both sides who are left to maintain the relationship between the two institutions.

Competitions

A favourite activity of the education scene in China, language competitions of various kinds have increased at all levels in the past seven years in Australia, with local winners sometimes going on to compete in China against other international students or Chinese locals.

Digital Resources

The possibility of students spending more time on Chinese outside the classroom has expanded considerably in recent years. Apart from making use of digital resources in classrooms, the capturing, storing and sharing of activities in digital form has allowed individual teachers, as well as whole sectors, to provide additional work, greater information and many forms of entertaining engagement in the language to students at all levels. Though they vary in quality, custom-created and commercial apps and video and audio files are all useful for aiding the retention of language and increasing students' proficiency.

Initiatives

Most states and territories have recently initiated a 'China Strategy' and education is included among priority areas, though predominantly

the thrust is receiving international students from China. Not all states and territories have embraced the Australian Curriculum for Languages: Chinese, but most are gradually introducing it in close to full form. All are promoting blended learning using technology across all subjects, including languages, and most are taking part in the $9.8 million trial of the federal government's initiative to provide online Chinese programs for pre-school age children (Early Learning Languages Australia).[29]

A number of states welcome students from Master of Teaching Chinese as an International Language courses offered at universities in China. The Hanban co-funds these students to go abroad for a year as Chinese Language Teaching Assistants. The Australian school provides accommodation for their assistant, who attends classes with the school's Chinese teacher and helps with resource preparation. Nearly half the assistants go to regional schools and the overwhelming majority of them have an excellent experience, learning about teaching their own language and improving their English, as well as gaining all the benefits of a typical gap year abroad. At the end of the visit, with their English in excellent shape, a good knowledge of local life and locations, an enhanced enthusiasm for teaching and often a school wishing to keep them, they go home. Most have a semester left in their degree to complete and, anyway, could never afford the $40,000 student visa and tuition fees to do even a single year of the teacher preparation in Australia that would allow them to become registered.

Beyond these activities, around the country, a number of special events and innovations have been introduced to promote and support the learning of Chinese. The major activities of this kind are described below.

Victoria

Victoria prides itself on being 'the languages state' and, despite a downturn in learner numbers, it has still close to 50 percent more students taking a language in Year 12 than the national average and more than half the total learners of Chinese in the country. The state

[29] <https://www.education.gov.au/early-learning-languages-australia>.

proclaims the value of all languages and has introduced a number of initiatives for all language courses, including Chinese. As well, there have been four significant Chinese-specific initiatives in the past six years.[30]

- Between 2009-2015, the Department of Early Childhood Development (now DET) supported the Chinese Teacher Training Centre (CTTC) which filled 2,500 half-day face-to-face professional development session places and provided online professional development to hundreds more; it also produced research into programs and practices of teaching Chinese in Victoria and created tailored resources to promote sound pedagogy and provide students with more independent opportunities to use the language. Despite strong participation from teachers interested in improving their teaching, the CTTC was closed when its contract expired;[31]

- At the end of 2012 Victoria introduced mandatory teaching of a language in all schools and this resulted in a massive increase in primary Chinese programs statewide; most involve each class group having a 30-minute lesson once a week;

- Victoria's Languages Policy of 2012 stated that bilingual and immersion teaching of languages would be promoted; two primary Chinese bilingual schools have operated for more than 20 years; in 2014, a government secondary school set up a bilingual program involving 12 hours a week of Science, Social Studies and Chinese Language Development taught in Chinese, whose target students were those graduating from one of the primary bilingual programs. A lack of consultation, uncoordinated early planning, and a lack of publicity, meant very low enrolments in the program's first two years, and as no additional funding was made available to tide it across two more years before a viable stream from Year 5 would begin to move to secondary, the principal decided to close the program at the end of 2015;

30 The most extensive in the country, a full list of Victoria's Chinese-related projects and services is provided in Appendix C.

31 CTTC publications may be accessed from <www.education.unimelb.edu.au/cttc/research/publications> or on the Language Learning Space <www.lls.edu.au>.

A fourth innovation has been a $13.1 million program run by the international section of the DET, which was set up to send 1,500 Year 9 students from partnering schools to China for six weeks over a period of five years. The in-country program comprises two weeks of intensive language tuition and four weeks of daily attendance at a Chinese high school; student reports of their experience in the two years run to date have been very positive. In 2015, in a move to strengthen numbers, the program was adjusted to allow it to support schools running the same program at their own sister school and opportunities were given to students in isolated regional programs to join as individuals; a partnering with the government-funded experiential Alpine School to provide a path for their leadership program opened the experience to students who are not learning Chinese in Australia.

New South Wales

The major initiative in Chinese in New South Wales in recent years has been the creation of a middle stream, Heritage background language course for the senior years. This removes many of the home speakers from the Chinese as a Second Language course, thereby opening up the possibility of a high score in L2 Chinese to the genuine classroom learners. The NSW Heritage course is also being trialled in other states.

A second innovation in NSW has been the location of a Confucius Institute within the Department of Education. This has led to the setting up of 13 Confucius Classrooms around NSW, a project that provides schools with cultural resources for a 'Chinese room' in the form of books, craftwork, maps and other visual material. In other states the Confucius Classroom project is run from a Confucius Institute attached to a university.

One innovation that could make a significant impact on all levels of learners are the language camps that have been run in NSW. While tilted somewhat towards maintaining heritage learners' knowledge of, and attachment to, their heritage, immersion experiences in the language while engaged in a real activity – field games, video games, stage plays, cooking, martial arts – are among the best environments known to support and extend language learning and motivation. Not

least, programs helping students from Chinese and non-Chinese backgrounds bond together in the learning of the language through participation in engaging, normal activities using the language are of enormous value.

Australian Capital Territory

In October 2015 the ACT Minister for Education and Training launched the territory's Mandarin Blueprint, a collection of current initiatives in the ACT which enhance the learning of Chinese and the understanding of Chinese culture. Key partners include education sector organisations, schools and their communities, community associations, embassies and industry.

In 2015 the Education and Training Directorate provided $50,000 to fund a series of small grants for Chinese language development projects.

The Mandarin Blueprint also supported the Chinese Language Network for teachers of Chinese set up in 2013, which provides teachers with the opportunity to meet once a term and conduct professional learning opportunities.

South Australia

In South Australia a new secondary graduation level Certificate of Education (SACE) has been introduced, with a requirement of just four subjects to count primarily towards the student's university entrance score. This has hit languages in South Australia badly, with Chinese Year 12 student numbers instantly tumbling by more than 30 percent.[32]

The South Australian Department for Education and Child Development is in the final planning stage for its first bilingual immersion program in a government primary school in 2016. The

[32] Tim Williams, 'Call to make foreign languages compulsory to Year 10, as SACE Board figures show less students are studying them', *Adelaide Advertiser,* June 4 2014, <http://www.adelaidenow.com.au/news/south-australia/call-to-make-foreign-languages-compulsory-to-year-10-as-sace-board-figures-show-less-students-are-studying-them/story-fni6uo1m-1226943250716>.

state government provided the start-up funds and the program will run F to 12, in one school or in a primary-secondary partnership.

Western Australia

In 2015, the Department of Education introduced the *Key Language Leaders* initiative, which draws on the expertise of language teachers, including Chinese, and supports them to become leaders in their language areas.

Schools in Western Australia are encouraged to teach languages from Pre-primary to Year 10, with a minimum stipulated of one language in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6, commencing with Year 3 in 2018 and in Years 7 and 8, commencing with Year 7 in 2022.

Western Australia has one bilingual Chinese program, established in 2013. It provides:

- Pre-primary students – seven and a half hours per week of Chinese as the language to teach Chinese, Literacy, Mathematics (Number and Space), Humanities and Social Sciences, Music and Physical Education;
- Primary years Chinese Second Language students – two hours per week;
- Primary years Chinese heritage/background speakers – one hour per week.

Queensland

2015 was a year of significant system changes for languages education in Queensland, with Year 7 promoted from being the top year in the primary sector to the lowest year in secondary, and adoption of the Australian Curriculum for Languages. The introduction of an external examination in Year 12 will be the next major adjustment. In the meantime, the existing criterion-referenced, school-based Year 12 assessment has allowed quite strong numbers of L2 learners

to continue to Year 12, although no count has been made of the exact figure.

Chinese Extension, introduced in 2011, is a two-semester optional course which extends the senior Chinese syllabus for second language learners who already have well-developed communicative skills. Teachers say it allows flexibility in assessment and topics that provide opportunity for students to extend themselves in realistic situations.

Northern Territory

In 2015, the Northern Territory Board of Studies introduced *Changing the Conversation: A Blueprint for Languages Education in Northern Territory Schools*. The aims are quality, continuity and sustainability of their rich linguistic resources. Chinese is only one of the second languages taught but it will be able to benefit from the territory's comprehensive, long-term plans for languages.

Tasmania

A late starter in Chinese language teaching, the number of Tasmanian schools teaching it in all sectors has grown strongly since 2010.

Teachers of Chinese are less well directly supported in Tasmania than elsewhere, though many attended CTTC Summer and Winter School sessions in Melbourne and took the online programs offered, often self-funded and in their own time. They have also managed to hook up by Skype to Victorian professional development sessions, showing that this inexpensive means of accessing colleagues and training could be much more widely used.

Tasmanian teachers of Chinese make great use of the federally-developed Languages Learning Space and would keenly like to see a similar site dedicated to Chinese at primary level.

Teacher Associations

The Chinese Language Teachers Federation of Australia was founded over 20 years ago. It holds an annual conference rotated among the major cities, which is attended by about 20 to 25 percent of state Chinese Language Teacher Association members.

The affiliated Chinese Language Teacher Associations (CLTAs) are active in all states. They act principally as a clearinghouse for information about examinations and competitions. This is done directly at meetings once a term, as well as by email or on their websites. CLTAs liaise with the education offices of the Chinese consulate, if there is one locally, and are usually involved in holding some kind of Chinese Culture Day, often in collaboration with a Confucius Institute. They also arrange teacher study tours to China in collaboration with the Hanban and sometimes also with commercial enterprises. The combined membership of the CLTAs is currently just short of 800. About two-thirds of the members are female and more than 90 percent are L1 speakers of Chinese. In some states the CLTA is active in providing a professional development program throughout the year.

Confucius Institutes

Confucius Institutes (CI) are cultural liaison offices set up in capital cities by the Hanban. Modelled loosely after bodies such as the British Council and Alliance Française, they vary in the degree to which they contribute directly to the teaching of Chinese in schools.

One key activity involving schools is management of the Hanban's Confucius Classroom program, which includes frequent contact with regional schools. In discussion with the author of this report, CI directors frequently described their work as being a bridge: 'We are the bridge and platform for interaction between the university and community, tertiary to secondary and between China and our Australian State ... We are the bridge to Hanban activities'. As well, most CIs invite the state CLTA members to run a teachers' workshop at least once a year, offer cultural activities and help with big events such as the annual national conference.

One of the most active in the schools area is the QUT-based CI, which offers

- a three-day immersion program in school holidays for some 60 Year 10 and 11 students
- language development in the form of an online writing course to teachers who are themselves second language users of Chinese
- non-award training such as ICT courses and some first language methodology using Australian work samples
- an award for excellence in teaching, and assistance to their own institution with teacher training
- regional professional development.

South Australia's University of Adelaide-based CI is also explicitly oriented to school teaching. Its major activities include:

- student workshops
- in-school workshops for teachers
- sending teachers and principals to China on study tours
- helping schools to establish sister relationships
- running professional training workshops for teachers
- giving language prizes
- supporting teachers professional activities such as conferences
- helping to establish and support Confucius Classrooms in schools
- supporting schools with teaching materials.

In addition to sharing many of the activities offered by other CIs, the CI based at the University of Melbourne offers briefings for parents on how to support their children's study of Chinese.

Tertiary

Tertiary Chinese programs vary considerably across the country and, in themselves, are not the focus of this report. However, there are three interrelated issues that should be noted about tertiary courses in relation to school learners.

The first is that not many institutions meet the complexity and expense of catering to the full range of incoming students' prior learner experience.[33] Secondly, with the adoption of the Melbourne Model at a number of universities, where professional degrees are only offered at postgraduate level and competitive entry to them is based on marks achieved in a three-year undergraduate degree, the problem of classroom learners competing with massive numbers of home speakers, which once stopped at the Year 12 examinations, has now spilled into undergraduate level study. Instead of heading off to their chosen course of study once their language competence had helped earn entry to their chosen career path, these students from other faculties are now swamping the Arts Faculty to take one or two semesters of the language in order to obtain a high mark and boost their chances for entry to a professional degree. If a Chinese Department is unable to offer courses which cater to the high level proficiency of home speakers, the genuine classroom learners who have persevered through to Year 12 only find the going gets harder when they reach university. Two such students, from different schools and in different years, have reported to the author walking into their first university class, looking around at all the Chinese background students in the room and thinking, 'This is just like school only worse', and walking out, abandoning the plan of studying Chinese in their degree. At Victorian universities, as little as 20 percent of first year students of Chinese may be Australian-born.

[33] See Appendix D for an example of a set of entry-level courses that is more complex than most, but still not entirely comprehensive in terms of learner levels.

The third problem is that when these students are deterred from taking Chinese in the early semesters, it sets off a vicious spiral: pressure mounts on departments to rationalise offerings and thus even less tailoring to level occurs, which means even fewer classroom learners are catered for and so fewer decide to go on with Chinese at tertiary level. As in the past, students from other faculties do not intend to make a serious study of the language and culture, and once they have padded out their transcript with a couple of semesters of high marks, they leave. In fact very few students in Chinese departments at all go on to major in the language these days, let alone take Honours, and at most institutions those who do are of Chinese background.

TEACHERS

Current Provision

All states and territories except Western Australia report an adequate supply of teachers of Chinese, while the Northern Territory foresees a possible shortage soon of trained primary teachers of the language. Even in Victoria, where the greatest expansion of Chinese teaching in recent years has occurred, towards the end of 2015 there were still seven candidates on the public list waiting for a position and recent advertisements drew more than 20 applicants, two-thirds of whom were only in casual employment. Not all schools can attract a qualified teacher, however, and in remote areas, teachers of Chinese background who are trained to teach in other areas have often been persuaded to offer classes in the language. In some country districts, the teacher of Chinese is shared among several schools using digital technology and personal visits. In a few cases, commercial bodies are providing instruction by satellite hook up to unregistered native speaker teachers in China. A small minority of schools are exempted from offering a language due to special circumstances. The generally positive state of teacher supply will be considerably shaken within the coming five years as large numbers of the first wave of Chinese teachers retire. Furthermore, as there are very few teachers now aged in their forties or fifties, once those over 60 retire, most teachers of Chinese will be under the age of 40. Female teachers will still account for some 60 percent of total numbers; the number who themselves learned Chinese as a Second Language will shrink to just two or three

percent. Among the commonly taught languages in schools this is unique to Chinese.

As teaching 30 minutes a week per year level barely adds up to one day's work, even in the cities, primary Chinese teachers are very often shared among two or more schools. In a bid to avoid a fly-in fly-out staff member who is not really part of the school or able to pursue a career pathway for themselves, some primary schools prefer to have the language taught by a generalist trained primary teacher who happens to speak Chinese as a home language and can fill a full-time position with other teaching.

Most secondary teachers of Chinese are trained language teachers but those engaged to teach dedicated classes of home speakers in Advanced L2 or Heritage learner courses, or the Year 12 L1 program for international students, receive no teacher training for the task. Yet the backbone of Chinese teacher employment above Year 8 is teaching these home speakers and international students. They are quite tough positions for teachers due to the considerable pressure applied by parents. Aimed squarely at the goal of a high university entrance score, the courses tend to be tightly engineered to the tests, and the teaching quite educationally shallow with respect to understanding the nature of language, the experience of literature, or illuminating the issues of language use and identity. It should be added that there are some notable exceptions to this approach to teaching at this level. These teachers and others feel the L1 Chinese courses in the various states are tired and in need of solid revision.

Future Teacher Supply

A survey of Faculties of Education in Australia undertaken for this report revealed the following information about candidates in training to teach Chinese in 2015:

TABLE D: NUMBER AND TYPE OF TEACHERS OF CHINESE IN TRAINING 2015

Level	Award Type	Number of Students
Secondary	Pre-service	93
	Postgraduate	33
	Concurrent (B Ed)	2
Primary	Pre-service / Postgraduate	0
	Concurrent (B Ed)	1

- Teacher training is only offered to candidates preparing to teach their language as a second language; no training is available for teaching a language to home speakers or international first language speakers;
- Teachers of Chinese as a Second Language currently in training attend 14 institutions in six states;
- The highest number of candidates in one institution is 34 and the lowest is one;
- Eleven institutions indicated that their enrolment numbers were typical; one institution said its numbers were a bit lower than usual in both secondary and primary and one said its numbers in secondary were higher than usual;
- Languages method staff in these institutions are not speakers of Chinese.

Approximately 97 percent of teacher candidates are immigrant first language speakers, some of whom have been in Australia for some years already, others newly arrived on international student visas. Teachers who speak Chinese as a second language are a very small minority and often come into Chinese teaching along a non-traditional pathway.

Institutions that take in larger groups of students have difficulty in finding practicum placements and all say the lack of quality

placements is an impediment to good Chinese teacher preparation. This problem is especially acute for international students whose English proficiency and academic preparedness for a teaching career can be lacking. An improvement in the last eight years is that students likely to run into trouble due to such factors are often now rejected for enrolment by the more rigorous teacher selection procedures, though these have not been implemented in all institutions.

Teacher Education Standards

In the past decade professional bodies in Australia and the United States have published standards for school language teachers.[34] The Chinese government has also published standards specifically for teachers of Chinese as a foreign language.[35] All these documents agree that an effective language teacher will have developed:

- strong proficiency in the target language
- knowledge of the nature of language and culture
- knowledge of learning and learner development
- a repertoire of instructional strategies
- the capacity to plan a course of learning and to assess it
- the ability to reflect on and improve their own practice.

In Australian universities, language teaching methodology is normally a generic course, with teacher candidates of all languages in the same class together. As a result, they do not receive instruction in teaching the challenges of their specific language and teacher candidates in Chinese, for example, are not taught how to teach tones or characters

[34] Australian Federation of Modern Language Teachers Associations, *Professional Standards for the Accomplished Teaching of Modern Languages and Cultures*, Belconnen, ACT: AFMLTA, 2005; American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Languages / Council for Accreditation of Educator Preparation, Program Standards for the Preparation of Foreign Language Teachers, Alexandria, Virginia, USA: ACTFL, 2013: <http://www.actfl.org/2013-program-standards-the-preparation-foreign-language-teachers> .

[35] Hanban, *International Standards for Chinese Language Teachers*, Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, 2007: <http://english.hanban.org/node_9906.htm>.

or the density of vocabulary and burden on memory that Chinese presents to learners. Student teachers pick up what they can during their practicums but what they participate in at their school has not been prepared specifically for them: it is whatever the classes are up to in those weeks. Consequently, few trainee teachers are present when beginning learners are introduced to tones, characters or Pinyin Romanisation, for example. It is left to chance whether they get any serious instruction in teaching Chinese beyond some experience with whatever textbook is being used and some encouragement to do this or that as specified by their supervising teacher: to drum the characters in or just let students do what they can and will do and not push too hard. There are some exceptions to this pattern and it needs to be made clear that the problem is generally not a reluctance by the supervising teacher to do the job, but endemic weaknesses due to the lack of teaching methodology and the sheer lack of joint free time to get anything solid established due to the excessive busy-ness of teachers. The situation is often compounded by the classroom management difficulties of the trainee, which tends to draw a lot of attention when supervisor and trainee are together. Learning to deal with these difficulties is made harder by the fact that successful classroom management and student relationships are problems often still being faced by the supervising teacher.

In the United States, schools are clear about demanding that teachers meet their published standards, frank about what they see as lacking in the practice of those from other educational cultures, and active in assisting their development as competent teachers in the American system.[36] In Australia, efforts at helping teachers from a Chinese educational background to work productively in ways that meet national curriculum expectations are largely left to individual schools. The difficulties for all involved are that the wanted changes are not superficial but go to the very core of central beliefs and values about the nature of human beings, the concept of learning, and social roles and relationships. Positive experiences which would allow immigrant teachers of Chinese to imagine how things might be done differently from the very uniform practices they went

[36] See for example Marjorie Hall Haley and Melissa S. Ferro, 'Understanding the perceptions of Arabic and Chinese teachers toward transitioning into U.S. schools', *Foreign Language Annals*, Vol. 44, Issue 2, pp. 289–307, Summer 2011.

through in their own schooling are not easy to provide. Although their experience in pre-service and even undergraduate courses does give them knowledge of the Australian system, and they do enjoy some parts of these courses, many do not especially appreciate what often seems to them as messy lessons and time wasted making students think of their own ideas and projects, or listen to fellow students whose knowledge is a great deal less than the teacher's. Raised in a society where public face must be maintained at a premium, and a cutthroat assessment schedule is in place from kindergarten, most are fixated on content and perfection and have little appreciation of the tentative process of mastery as it unfolds in learning activities, their own or others'.

As a result, while they rue the loss of students, Chinese teacher associations in Australia do not appear unduly concerned about the state of Chinese language in the country. It is not a constant topic of conversation or a central focus at their meetings and conferences; there are no projects to change the status quo, although they participate in changes suggested by others. Many who teach L2 Chinese also teach home speakers and coping with the relentless pressure from Chinese parents to ensure that their children do well occupies more of the little free time the teachers have than systematically creating innovation for teaching the L2s. Those who do teach the L2s are divided in where they see the source of the problem, with many blaming students for laziness or falling back on the idea that 'Chinese is hard'; but many also are dedicated to improving their practice, discovering new ways to use ICT to engage students, and participating in sharing resources and ideas with colleagues across schools and even states. They are often isolated, however, and find it tough to keep going without the practical and emotional support of a body such as the now closed CTTC. For their part, Australian school leaders and even parents seem resigned to the idea that Chinese is hard and that everyone is doing their best so no more can be asked. It is proposed here that much more can be done – and that long term planning and support is crucial to its achievement.

There has been considerable growth in the number of Chinese programs on offer across the country and in every state and territory there are some interesting initiatives, large or small, being undertaken

to assist the development of Chinese. However the outcomes are disappointing and inadequate for the nation's needs. The centre of dysfunction is clearly in the quality of teaching provided in schools. But it is unreasonable to blame teachers who have not been trained for their work for producing poor results.

All language teachers deserve dedicated time on teaching the specifics of their language during their training. Not to provide this is to undercut the success of language learning from the start. Due to the very particular nature of Chinese and the learning demands it makes on students,[37] and due to the fact that there are so few teachers of Chinese for whom it is a second language – teachers who know the learner's path – it is critical that future teachers of Chinese be soundly educated so that they:

- Know the language as an object of learning; appreciate the nature of the learning challenges; have a repertoire of techniques to assist with the challenges;
- Develop a style of language teaching that incorporates reflection, only makes use of English for reflective activities and treats student error as a point to investigate;
- Develop a firm but warm, collaborative relationship with students;
- Train in practical methods and productive strategies for classroom management that are feasible for them to use; and
- Especially in Primary, learn how to introduce a coherent sequence of meaningful activities in primary Chinese such as games, stories, crafts, content learning about, for example, the natural world and using electronic devices.

What is essential, is the acceptance that most of the teachers' problems stem from very deep cultural differences, and from beliefs and values not readily relinquished and as a result teachers cannot be expected to make those changes on their own. Only recognition of the urgency of the national need for better outcomes can support the demand that they undertake such development.

[37] Chapter 5 outlines the learning challenges of Chinese.

Chapter 4
The Learners

Second Language Learners

Chinese occupies a unique place among the most commonly taught languages in Australian schools as in the senior years it includes three distinct streams of learners. Discussion of these groups is made difficult because of the different, and even contradictory, nomenclature used in each state. In this report, these students are referred to according to their status as learner of Chinese: Chinese-society born and schooled students are *first language learners* (L1); those speaking Chinese at home although schooled in Australia at least since the end of primary are *home speaker learners* (HS); and those for whom Chinese is essentially a second language studied at school are *classroom learners* (L2).

The very large number of first language learners have typically moved to Australia in time to do a half year of intensive English language study followed by their two final years of schooling. They have separate Chinese curriculum and assessment procedures from that of local students and very often work in a separate class from local students. The home speaker learners stream is a mixed group comprising locally-raised home speakers of Modern Standard Chinese (Mandarin) and also competent users of other Chinese languages (often called dialects) such as Cantonese or Hakka. There is also a very small group of non-Chinese background students who belong in this group. These are children who have learned the language in a Chinese-speaking society from domestic staff at home or by attending a Chinese primary school for some period.

While not all students of Chinese heritage are home speakers, the children of recent immigrants virtually all are and they generally continue with the language until Year 12, most often in the same class as the beginner classroom learners who are studying Chinese only at school. Thus a great many beginners find themselves working alongside classmates who already speak the language either very well or quite well. The percentage of such competent learners varies considerably from school to school, with just one or two students per class in some places while in others they may comprise almost all students in the class. The strong presence of learners who have spoken Chinese since birth is one of the greatest deterrents to

genuine classroom learners continuing. Not only are they outdone in every task despite their best efforts, it is effectively impossible for them to do well in the senior years. Faced with such a tilted playing field, the highest achieving classroom learners of Chinese are the ones who most often drop out.

This situation is the result of two events, the first in 1989, when some 42,000 young Chinese already in Australia were permitted to remain and become permanent residents; the second in 1995, when immediate admission to permanent residency became possible for university graduates on student visas, resulting in a steady increase ever since in young, well-educated, new residents. The children of these newcomers began to appear in large numbers in secondary schools after the turn of the century and since 2008 they have been presenting in Year 12. Home speakers of Chinese since birth – and many have also spent time over the years staying with family in China as well as years in after-school Chinese literacy classes – they have a mastery of grammar and pronunciation and a large vocabulary which amounts to an unmatchable grip on the language compared to any classroom learner.

Evidence of this gap is clearly demonstrated, for example, in the findings of the Student Achievement in Asian Languages Education Project[38] and the study of one Year 12 group by O'Meara.[39] In the latter, an elicited imitation (EI) test was used in which students listen to sentences and then repeat them as exactly as possible. When a sentence is too long to be recalled from short-term memory, students must recall the message and reconstruct it using their grammar skills and express it with intelligible pronunciation.[40] The results are presented in Table E.

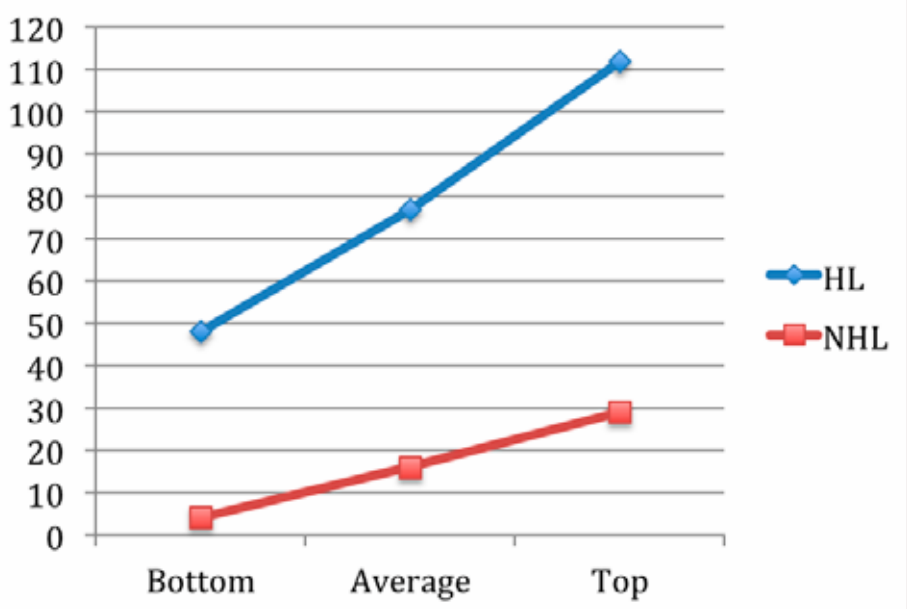
[38] Australian Government Department of Education and Workplace Relations, *Student Achievement in Asian Languages Education,* DEEWR, Canberra, ACT, 2011, <http://www.saale.unisa.edu.au/examples_ch.html>.

[39] Gary O'Meara, 'The necessity to redefine Chinese second language learners: a Victorian case study', *Babel,* Vol. 49, No. 1, 2014, pp. 18-25.

[40] Shu-Ling Wu and Lourdes Ortega, 'Measuring global oral proficiency in SLA research: a new elicited imitation test of L2 Chinese', *Foreign Language Annals*, Vol. 46, No. 4, 2013, pp. 680-704.

TABLE E: RESULTS OF EI CHINESE PROFICIENCY TEST ADMINISTERED TO THE YEAR 12 CLASS OF VCE L2 CHINESE IN 2012

HL = Home speaker learners (11 students)
NHL = Non-home speaker learners (21 students)



Maximum score possible: 120

HL Top score: 112 (93.3%)
Bottom score: 48 (35.8%)
Average: 77 (64%)

NHL Top Score: 29 (21.2%)
Bottom score: 4 (3.3%)
Average: 16 (13.3%)

Home speakers have been potentially eligible within the guidelines to take Chinese as a Second Language (L2) in every Australian state. As a result, they have swamped the genuine second language learners, obtaining every top score in the quota available. Because of this, classroom learners in even the strongest programs have begun to quit before Year 12 in order to maximise their university entrance score by taking subjects they can be sure of having a chance to do well in – and, indeed, are often advised by their school to do so. Many other second language students, looking ahead to unlikely success in Year 12, simply decide at the beginning of Year 7 not to study Chinese.

There has been no testing of home speakers against recently arrived international students, but it would be reasonable to suppose that with knowledge of 1,500 to 2,000 characters, the local home speakers would, themselves, be equally outdone in competition with international students, who would know more than 4,000 characters and have an educated grip on reading and writing. As well, as the data in Table E indicates, there is a very wide spread of competence among home speakers (the result of the varied source of their language exposure).

Because of the direct effect of Year 12 examination results on university entrance offers, parents of Chinese-speaking children do all they can to enrol their child in the easiest Chinese subject possible. Confronted by protests about the problems their children cause for genuine classroom learners, Chinese parents claim the situation occurs in other languages and that, for example, the children of Mathematics professors are advantaged in maths, so why should their child not benefit from their home language development? In Year 12 subjects like Chinese, however, grades are assigned in a descending order of merit, and the critical problem is not, in fact, simply one of home speaker higher proficiency, but also of their sheer volume. In Victoria, for example, the number of home speaker learners taking L2 Chinese in Year 12 outnumbers the classroom learners by a ratio of about six to one. Already more proficient at the age of five than any classroom learner in Year 12, the home speakers fill out the places at the top of the grade list, pushing the grade obtained by even the best of the classroom learners a very long way down. By contrast, the Mathematics professors the Chinese parents refer to would have a tiny handful of children presenting ever, and they would make very little impact on the results of other candidates in their year. This is also the case in the other five commonly-taught languages, where the number of proficient home speakers each year is small enough that more than half of the top places can still be taken by genuine L2 learners. It is the ratio of proficient home speakers to classroom learners that results in the qualitatively different situation in Year 12 Chinese classrooms.

It should be made clear that raising this point in no way suggests that the children of recent immigrants should not be permitted to

study their language or achieve high scores in their final year. On the contrary, their advanced skills should be valued for the future prospects of the students themselves and for Australia, and states should ensure these students are provided with a Chinese language course that builds on and expands their expertise. As it is, there is little more for them to learn in Year 12 – indeed most actually sit the subject in Year 11 without needing the final year – and they leave school with proficient but not fully adult language skills.

Responses

States have responded to L2 students' lack of opportunity to do well in Year 12 Chinese in different ways. All have long offered a separate course and examination for recently-arrived international students whose first language is Chinese and another for students educated in Australia. For ten years Victoria has also offered an additional stream in between, called Advanced L2 Chinese. Those taking Advanced L2 comprise approximately one third of the home speakers and their removal from the assessment of classroom learners in L2 Chinese still leaves these students outnumbered by home speakers between six to one, which virtually obliterates any chance of the L2s obtaining a score in the highest bracket (usually set at above 80 percent).

Since publication of the CLEAS report in 2008, New South Wales and Western Australia have also introduced a middle course, developed in NSW, called 'Heritage Chinese'. As Tables F and G show, the eligibility criteria for Victoria's Advanced L2 course and NSW's Heritage course are very similar:

TABLE F: VICTORIAN ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR VCE CHINESE SUBJECTS

Chinese Second Language	A student is not eligible for Chinese Second Language if they have had either: > 12 months or more education in a school where Chinese is the medium of instruction or > three years (36 months) or more residence in any of the VCAA nominated countries or regions.	The nominated countries and regions are China, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macau.
Chinese Second Language Advanced	A student is eligible for Chinese Second Language Advanced if: > they have had no more than seven years of education in a school where Chinese is the medium of instruction > the highest level of education attained in a school where Chinese is the medium of instruction is no greater than the equivalent of Year 7 in a Victorian school.	The time periods referred to in these criteria will be counted cumulatively since the time of the student's birth.

As the formal commencement age for a Victorian student is five, then all applicants will be deemed to have commenced formal education by the end of their fifth year of age, regardless of the setting.

TABLE G: NEW SOUTH WALES ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR HSC CHINESE SUBJECTS

Continuers	Students are learning the language as a second (or subsequent) language. Students typically have studied the language for 200 to 400 hours at the commencement of Stage 6. (In languages where Extension courses are offered, the Extension courses are available to HSC Continuers course candidates only.)	> Students have had no more than one year's formal education from the first year of primary education (Year 1) in a school where the language is the medium of instruction. > Students have had no more than three years residency in the past 10 years in a country where the language is the medium of communication. > Students do not use the language for sustained communication outside the classroom with someone with a background in using the language.
Heritage	Students typically have been brought up in a home where the language is used and they have a connection to that culture. These students have some degree of understanding and knowledge of the language. They have received all or most of their formal education in schools where English (or another language different from the language of the course) is the medium of instruction. Students may have undertaken some study of the language in a community, primary and/or secondary school in Australia. Students may have had formal education in a school where the language is the medium of instruction up to the age of 10.	Students have had no formal education in a school where the language is the medium of instruction beyond the year in which the student turns 10 years of age (typically Year 4 or 5 of primary school).

Eligibility is determined by the principal of the school delivering the course.

The authority to determine eligibility is delegated to principals by BOSTES.[41]

Formal education is 'education that is institutionalised, intentional and planned through public organizations and recognised private bodies and – in their totality – constitute the formal education system of a country' (UNESCO International Standard Classification of Education, 2011).

[41] Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards, the educational policy governing body of NSW.

In an attempt to keep students learning Chinese to Year 12 despite the presence of home speakers, Victoria has developed an additional Year 12 subject to be introduced for consultation at the end of 2015, which combines some language study with Chinese cultural studies taught in English. Intended to 'attract students who might wish to continue but don't feel confident at more advanced levels'[42], it may be of benefit to students who would have scored low in L2 Chinese, anyway, and who would most likely have quit before Year 11. However, this move changes nothing about privileging home speakers because it dodges rather than deals with the main issue. Home speakers of Chinese have been schooled in English all or most of their lives, so can be both the top scorers in the Chinese section and perfectly competent in the English section in the new subject. Of central pertinence, however, is that classroom learners who are strong students of the language do not want reduced language content – they want all the language they can get.

A further development has been the switch by a small but growing number of schools in Victoria to offering Vocational Education and Training (VET) certificates in Chinese as an alternative to, or replacement for, the Year 11 and Year 12 Chinese as a Second Language subject. VET Certificate III is a course that approximates the level of Year 12 Unit 3 (that is, the first half year of Year 12 in a Higher School Certificate course) and students and teachers find the nature of the work linked to professional use of the language lively and relevant. Criterion-referenced assessment means all who meet the standard can be recognised with a high score, and the school based curriculum development and moderated assessment give the chance to build on the actual prior work done in earlier years. Thus non-background learners can do well in this subject. VET Certificate III is not a subject which can be counted among the top four subjects that are the foundation of a student's university entrance score. It does, however, still contribute to that final score because, like Higher School Certificate / Certificate of Education language subjects, it earns the five bonus points given for taking a language. Although, as noted, it is not necessarily drawing students who would otherwise have done VCE Chinese, in Victoria the numbers taking the

[42] Konrad Marshall and Craig Butt, 'New Chinese subject to level playing field', *The Age,* December 18 2013, p. 5.

Certificate III course are increasing swiftly – nearly 300 in 2015 - and the move to VET Chinese has attracted the interest of Chinese teachers and administrators in other states.

The Year 12 assessment procedure in Queensland is also criterion-referenced and hence non-background students can do well as results are not listed in rank order. Even in Queensland, however, schools where numerous home speakers are being taught with classroom learners find that the latter tend to become discouraged by endlessly being outdone and quit before the senior years. As well, Queensland is preparing to introduce an external Certificate of Education, which will encounter the same issues.

Remedial Action

The critical block home speakers represent to any chance of increasing non-background learner numbers in Year 12 was explained in detail in the 2008 CLEAS report – it was identified as the number one deterrent to non-background learners continuing Chinese language study. This was not unknown at the time to the state Boards of Study and Curriculum and Assessment Authorities that set the regulations for senior assessment and the situation has persisted effectively untouched by the new offerings mentioned above, all of which avoid dealing with the central issue. For their part, all but one of the Boards of Studies say they fear the threats made by Chinese background parents to sue them on the grounds of racial discrimination if they try to make their child enrol at a more advanced level on the basis of experience with the home language.

This advice runs counter to the view of the former Commonwealth Antidiscrimination Commissioner, Dr Helen Szoke, and of Melbourne Law School Antidiscrimination Law expert, Professor Beth Gaze, both of whom believe that the parents' position would not be upheld by the Human Rights Commission. In an interview with *The Australian's* Bernard Lane, Szoke said: 'There's no nexus directly to race – it's a kind of universal language proficiency rule',[43] while Gaze wrote: 'There is no exclusion involved, merely an appropriate allocation to streams,

[43] Bernard Lane, 'Class struggle for future of Chinese language', *The Australian Higher Education Supplement*, October 24 2011.

so no denial of a human right'.[44] Indeed, when such a claim was made by two Chinese background families, one of which took it all the way to the Human Rights Commission, it was defeated.[45] In line with the advice from experts cited, especially with respect to the wording used in drafting the regulations, the Commission ruled the state had the right to divide entrance to a sequentially mastered subject by levels of proficiency. Proficiency was defined in terms of use of and experience in the language, unrelated to ethnicity or heritage. In fact, this is no different to what is done with sports events by age (the Under 12s, the Under 15s), by years of training with horses in dressage competitions and by size in boxing matches, to name a few diverse examples. The Commission found that there was strong evidence that the student in the case did not meet the criteria of entry to the L2 Chinese subject which, it is explicitly stated, is offered to those who learn Chinese primarily in a classroom. The Commission also ruled that regulations for allocation to streams could not be set for Chinese alone but would have to be the same for all languages. This is now the case in Western Australia. It has entailed some additional office work, but the numbers involved in other languages are small and few allocations are contested.

Eligibility regulations for enrolment in L2 Chinese vary somewhat across states, but criteria for exclusion everywhere involve years of residence and attendance at school in a Chinese-speaking society. These criteria are relevant to proficiency development and are also relatively easy to check using public records, thus making it difficult for false statements to go undetected. Western Australia makes its allocation decisions based on these criteria of overseas residence and schooling, and, in addition, considers attendance at community language schools whose attendance records are lodged with the Department of Education, and the principal's recommendation, which advises on the language the student speaks at home.

[44] Beth Gaze, personal correspondence with the author, 2011.
[45] Bethany Hiatt, 'Language courses in big shake-up', *The West Australian*, August 14 2015, p.26.

TABLE H: WESTERN AUSTRALIA CERTIFICATE OF EDUCATION ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR CHINESE AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

WACE second language courses are aimed at students for whom the language is a second (or subsequent) language. These students are not exposed to or interact in the language outside the language classroom and have typically learnt everything they know about Chinese and its culture through classroom teaching in an Australian school or similar environment, where English is the language of school instruction. These students were not born, nor have they lived in a country where Chinese is spoken, although they may have experienced stays of up to 12 months (student or school exchanges) or resided for a period of up to one year in a country where Chinese is spoken.

Eligibility is determined on the basis of:

> the principals recommendation

> country or place of residence from birth

> language of formal schooling

> attendance at community language schools

> the students linguistic background

> consideration of other relevant documentation.

An on balance judgement is made on the basis of all information provided.

The school principal completes the principal's declaration and recommends the student as 'eligible' or 'not eligible'.

School Curriculum and Standards Authority officers consider the application and make a determination based on:

a) the published criteria and the evidence provided by the student

b) the principal's recommendation; and where required

c) consultation with the language teacher / school representative.

At a time when Australia needs its best students learning Chinese in combination with substantive content areas of study – when in their own interest students would do well to be familiar and better with Chinese thinking, Chinese people and the language – participation rates in L2 Chinese in the senior years are steadily dropping. Melbourne High School, Victoria's most prestigious government selective secondary school for boys and source of many leaders in government, business and cultural life, offers five L2 languages plus Latin to its students but will not offer L2 Chinese because there is no chance of students achieving a high score; rich programs in independent schools that have been built up over decades are at risk as hardworking, keen and able learners of Chinese opt out of a subject they love because, despite working harder at it than at any other subject, despite getting A+ in all their other subjects, they have no hope of doing well in a subject called L2 Chinese that is full of

students for whom it is not a second language, who have spoken Chinese since birth.

The West Australian precedent suggests that there are sound legal grounds to support allocating educated home speakers to the middle stream of candidates in Years 11 and 12, just as the Australian Curriculum for Languages in Chinese proposes be done in earlier years. Nonetheless, in a letter to the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority in late 2015, the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commissioner advised that 'There could be grounds for parents claiming indirect discrimination by such a move because those most affected will be children from Chinese families'.[46] However, adding attendance at community language schools and considering the home language to the criteria would not exclude all children from Chinese families. Furthermore, the VEOHRC letter states that although undertaking action such as separating home speakers from classroom learners might pose some risk of discrimination, arguments for doing so could be accepted if they showed that there were 'special circumstances' and that 'the negative outcome could be outweighed by the size of the negative consequences of not proceeding with the action'. The consequences of not proceeding are decidedly negative and widespread and the West Australian regulations and checking procedures provide a model that could be adopted nationally. It requires a statutory declaration by parents concerning residence, school attendance and language use, information which is monitored against airport departure and arrival records, community school attendance records and day-school principals' attestations. Bonus points for being bilingual would also assist compliance and make it clear to students that being bilingual is valued and that relegation to the stronger level is a mark of respect, not a punishment. Until this is achieved, there can be no real future for the study of Chinese as a Second Language in schools.

Home Language Speakers

The 2008 CLEAS report pointed out that while home speakers by definition are not second language learners, their proficiency is an

[46] See Appendix E for the VEOHRC letter, obtained with permission of the VCAA and the VEOHRC.

asset for themselves and the country and they should be nurtured by having a course tailored to their need for language development, from basic literacy to expansion into educated, adult usage. The Australian Curriculum for Chinese has answered this call for a home speakers' learning path in the secondary Years 7 to 10. Creating a separate stream, not simply asking the students to do more in the second language learners' course, was undertaken in recognition that someone who starts using a language from birth and someone who meets it only as a school subject are on two quite different, non-intersecting learning trajectories. While home speakers tend to have an easy time in terms of effort required to do well in school Chinese, they often do it quite tough in terms of their actual educational needs in relation to Chinese.

Two key features of the group as a whole are, firstly, the very wide and diverse standards of proficiency in modern standard Chinese that they exhibit, and, secondly, the constant challenges to their sense of identity as they move between home culture and school culture and between Australia and their family's original Chinese society base. With respect to the first point, most home speakers are fairly proficient users of the standard language, but some are speakers of a quite different dialect, albeit a tonal language and one that has the same grammatical features as Modern Standard Chinese and is written in the same characters. In between there are home speakers of standard Chinese whose language use is limited to home-based conversations with one parent. The language of these students is often quite simple and their expressive range limited to domestic topics. In contrast, others develop a broad, fluent control of current Chinese as they move back and forth to China on holidays, sometimes even attending school there for a week or two.

Literacy development among the group is even more diverse, with some quite proficient speakers unable to read and write at all, while others are able to read and write with some skill. As a result, the needs of these students in terms of linguistic development are broad and often quite individual. Developing their language skills demands dedicated attention and a set of finely graded resources. These are rarely provided. Instead, the home speaker students usually share lessons with classroom learners, where they generally do well but

their potential for development is often neglected. Research indicates that these students' written language bears a greater resemblance to second language learners' work than the written work of native speakers, albeit at a more advanced level than their peers.[47] More commonly, home speakers will attend Chinese classes at a private language school on a Saturday or after school where they will have traditional lessons in text study for literacy development. As they reach the end of their schooling, the most diligent will have mastered about 2,000 characters and all would know some 1,500. This is three times the classroom learner Year 12 standard of 500, but a long way below the 3,000 characters already mastered by primary school graduates in China. Dialect speakers will often speak with a noticeable non-standard accent, a feature strictly penalised in oral examinations.

There have been some recent studies done in the United Kingdom on the learning in private Chinese language schools which reveal very clearly the identity issues of the Chinese background learner.[48] Their teachers are usually Mainlanders who approach their students with a generally unexamined assumption that they are and want to be 'young Chinese', and will behave accordingly. Faced with this claim on their identity, the young British of Chinese origin often exhibit the Western norms of their day school, challenging assertions of their Chinese teacher and offering alternative interpretations of texts and propositions. Some even turn to needling the teacher by, for example, arguing against sacred Mainland government propositions such as Taiwan not being a separate country. The students' sense of being stranded between two cultures is evident in the self-deprecating term *bai ling gou* which they have invented for themselves: a transliteration of 'bilingual', the literal meaning of which is 'white collar dog', a

47 Yun Xiao, Discourse Features and development in Chinese L2 Writing, in Michael Everson and Helen Shen (eds), *Research among learners of Chinese as a foreign language*, Chinese Language Teachers Association Monograph Series Volume 4, pp. 133-151, University of Hawaii National Foreign Language Resource Center, Honolulu, HI, 2010.
Australian Government Department of Education and Workplace Relations, *Student Achievement in Asian Languages Education*. DEEWR, Canberra, ACT, 2011. <http://www.saale.unisa.edu.au/examples_ch.html>.

48 See for example, Wei Li and Hua Zhu, 'Changing hierarchies in Chinese language education for the British Chinese learners' and Linda Tsung and Ken Cruickshank (eds), 'Teaching and Learning Chinese in Global Contexts', pp. 11-28. Continuum, London & New York, 2011.

reference to parental pressure to single-mindedly submit to training for a white collar job.[49]

Although these students mostly score well on Chinese assessment tasks and present with a veneer of proficiency, a great many of the home speakers do not receive the strong Chinese language education that would develop their range and control of the language to adult level. While competent to make practical arrangements and negotiate simple transactions, they do not have the language competence of a functional bilingual adult, someone able to present the desired image of a business or negotiate with finesse. Nor do they have the language skills to find and assess detailed information required by government decision makers. One education official, who also teaches in a day school, wrote for this report:

> I have a lot of students come to me from ethnic schooling. I have seen the textbooks these schools use and while the level is quite high, the students are not able to demonstrate any of that in their own language use. They often learn grammar for the first time in my classes and they do not have any idea of components in characters, they just learnt by writing them lots of times without knowing what they really meant. They also don't do a lot of speaking, which is odd.

The middle stream of the Australian Curriculum for Chinese was designed to give these students a course of language development that would extend their knowledge and control of the language to an educated adult standard. When it comes to the pinch, however, it is acknowledged by Chinese Language Teachers Association representatives that most Chinese parents want to forego these educational benefits in favour of the easier high score that comes from competing with classroom learners. This choice is not necessarily in the long-term best interests of the home speaker student and is certainly not in the best interests of the country.

[49] Wei Li, 'When a community language goes global: Chinese language education in Britain', Keynote address to the *1st International Chinese as a Second Language Research Conference*, Zhejiang University, Hangzhou, China, August 27-29 2010.

First Language Speakers

If home speakers are a somewhat neglected group educationally, first language students register largely only in the awareness of those who teach and house them. They are a widely disparate group, coming from all parts of the Sinophone world, but predominantly from all over Mainland China. Some have moved to Australia with their families, others live with relatives or family friends. The rest board at their school or are placed in a home-stay. International students offer schools one of the few opportunities they have for an independent line of income and hence these students are often sought after. Regional schools have made a strong play to attract enrolments, many making use of civic connections within sister-states and cities in China, or seek to expand the sister school link they already have for their Chinese language program. International students who do not attend independent or government day schools will attend one of the Chinese-run registered cram schools which have been established in inner city and urban areas with high Chinese populations.

The content and standard of education these students need is largely out of the hands of the local authorities, who, not knowing Chinese themselves, must rely on the teachers of Chinese to design and teach an appropriate curriculum at this level. Up until very recently, the incoming international Chinese students have been an earnest lot, focused on getting as high a score in Year 12 as possible. These students tended to have developed high level skills in Chinese language and Mathematics and be diligent and able students in all their subjects. In Year 12, in addition to L1 Chinese and Mathematics, their common favourites were Business Studies, Computer Studies, Physics and Chemistry. More recently, however, there has been a noticeable change in the type of student coming from China, with up to a third showing much lower levels of language skills and a completely disinterested attitude to Year 12 achievement. The Australian government has recently lowered the age at which international students may come to school in Australia to 13 and the impact of this is yet to be felt in local classrooms. To continue to develop cognitively it will be important for these younger students to continue to receive a high standard of mother tongue education

throughout their secondary schooling, in addition to, and as an aid in, becoming proficient in English.

Apart from incoming international students, there has also been a growth in offshore candidates enrolling in Year 12 certificates while remaining in China. The work of these students is supervised by Australian teachers who are employed at the in-China base of various registered Australian schools. The advantages for the Chinese students are lower fees, being able to live at home and even being able to sit the Chinese government Year 12 certificate as well. The increase in the numbers of these off-shore students has had an impact on local students of Chinese in Australia who fall into the L1 stream due to having spent some time studying in a Chinese secondary school. L1 students who arrived in Australia after just one or two years of study in China beyond primary have always found themselves outclassed in senior years language assessment by the L1 students arriving after four years of high school in China; now they are even further outdone, with a tougher course and a growing number of competitors who are sitting from inside China having had six years in high school there.

There have been some efforts to develop appropriate resources for the L1 group and new publications are noticeably more mature and issues-oriented than before, a trend which should be further developed and resourced. Much of the teaching of these students, however, remains no more than a tightly-regimented attack on likely examination content. Teachers agree that many have become stale going through the same old material and that L1 courses need a complete revision.

The diversity of the learners of Chinese and the very marked differences in their language competence is a headache for school officials, one which they tend to ignore, leaving it to the Chinese teacher to manage. The teachers do their best – especially as their job often depends on there being enough of these students to run a class at all – but most are untrained for dealing with the complexities involved and, indeed, their situation is often such that even an expert teacher would be scrambling to cope. The impact of this state of affairs on the quality of Chinese language education offered to all the students, and on the motivation of L2 learners, can be severe.

Chapter 5
The Language

The Learning Task

Even without the loss of L2 students in senior years due to their being unable to compete successfully in Year 12 with large numbers of home speakers, the development of Chinese in Australian schools faces difficulties that derive from the nature of the language itself.

Learning any second language requires cognitive adjustment to new rhythms, sounds and forms and dedicated effort to absorb a large volume of new vocabulary and new ways of encoding the language in writing. Compared to European languages, Chinese demands relatively small adjustments in grammar for English-speaking learners, but it presents four challenges that make progress in acquisition constantly difficult: spoken Chinese is tonal; the language is written in characters; the lexicon is composed from a set of only 1,200 syllables (many words in their own right, they also form the syllables of compound words); and Chinese contains a great many homophones and virtually no English cognates.

The key to success in conquering these challenges is for teachers and learners to appreciate that mastery of Chinese requires the learner to gradually develop some new very basic motor skills involving the vocalic system and eye movements, and cognitive skills to support processing of and remembering the new language. One reason for the poor progress many students make is that the extended foundation that needs to be developed from the start has rarely been appreciated and hence the new base is never thoroughly constructed.

Tone

Students of Chinese are introduced to the basic facts of tone: syllables can be said with the pitch and contour of the voice going in different directions – high-even, mid-rising, low-flat rising and high-falling – and the same syllable changes meaning when said in the different tones. Thus just as *pan*, *pen* and *pin* in English are different words because of the vowel change, so *mā, má, mǎ* and *mà* are different words in Chinese, with totally unrelated meanings (mother, hemp, horse, to curse) due to the change in tone. Students are commonly expected to learn the tones by listening and repeating after the teacher or a recording.

The key learning challenge, however, goes unrecognised: competence in English requires the listener to screen out tonal variation (Query: Bob? Astonished: *Bo-ob*?? Angry: Bob!) to reach the meaning encoded in the sounds of the syllable b o b, so whatever the sentiment being expressed by the speaker's voice, the listener recognises that the person being spoken about in each case is the same: Bob. Thus the primary learning task in spoken Chinese is not simply to 'add tone to syllables', but to foreground tone as the place where the basic meaning referent is being expressed. Unless required to work on shifting their attention to tone as primary and individual sounds secondary, it is common to see a student even at an advanced level write down the sounds of the syllable for a character, for example *pan*, and then look up and say, 'What tone is *pan*?' But *pan* without a tone does not exist in Chinese. The word the student heard was not *pan*, but either *pān, pán, pǎn* or *pàn*. Working from fundamental skills that are sufficient in English, however, the student has automatically screened out the tone. In Chinese this is a dead-end strategy.

Dealing with the tone of a single syllable is only the beginning. In bi-syllabic words the pronunciation of tones varies according to which tones are being combined, and there are even certain words that are generally atonal in actual speech. As well, the tonal value of a syllable depends on its salience in the message and the degree to which it is stressed or not. Unstressed syllables have reduced tonal value, or even lose tone altogether.

Tones are a feature of the vowel, and are also influenced by the position of the syllable in the utterance – opening or closing a phrase, or somewhere in the middle – and by the tones and sounds that surround them. On top of this, as in all speech, Chinese utterances have their own rhythmic patterns and follow overarching intonational patterns. The learning task is to combine tone with all the features which make language sound natural, and it is this that makes the speaker's message comprehensible even if there are some errors. Most of these elaborations on the basic four tones are rarely taught, and even more rarely practised in any ongoing and systematic way. Instead, work focuses on trying to get students to perfect their tones in single syllables, or their efforts are simply accepted despite the faults, and despite quite comical outcomes: the student points to a

photo of her horse and says, 'This is my mother', or says to a stranger in the street, 'Please kiss me', meaning to say 'Please tell me [the way to the station]'.

Literacy

Characters encode meaning (not sound) and each represents a meaningful syllable but not how to pronounce it, in the same way that each numeral represents a quantity and may be said in quite different ways in different languages while keeping the same meaning: 2 = *two, deux, zwei, ni, er,* etc. Thus 我 means 'I', which in Chinese is said as *wo*. Students have no difficulty grasping the idea that each character represents a syllable or word without giving any clue as to its pronunciation. What makes learning characters a challenge lies in having to sharpen visual perception so as to look efficiently at often complex sets of strokes organised in a number of different ways inside a square space (a 'box') that is always of the same size, no matter how many strokes there are, for example 疑 一 中 澳, and having to distinguish often similar-looking characters (for example 粮 and 根), as well as having to remember both the meaning and sound of each.

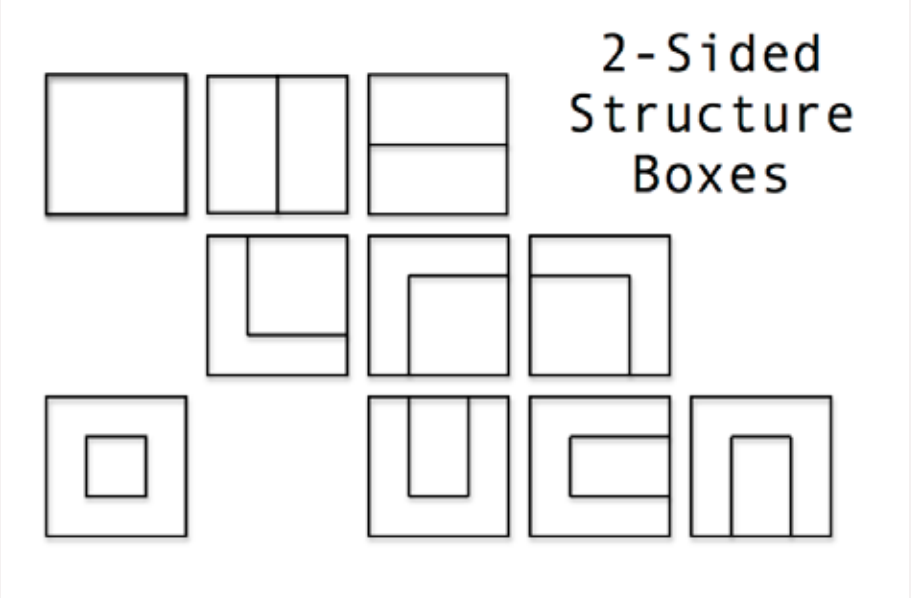
There are two forms of Chinese characters, the so-called *full form* and the *simplified form*. Students in Australian schools learn simplified characters, which were adopted by the Chinese government in the early 1950s. They are based on modifications which were often used in handwriting. Full form characters were used in writing classical Chinese and most calligraphy. Many simplifications are standard alterations, for example 食 → 饣 , thus 飯 → 饭; 飽 → 饱; 飼 → 饲; 餃 → 饺. Simplified characters were quickly adopted by Singapore and Malaysia, but Hong Kong and Taiwan continue to use full form characters. Assessment material for L1 Chinese in Australia is printed in both forms and students are permitted to use either set of characters, but once they opt they must then be consistent.

The key to developing competence is to study the components that characters are made up of – equivalent to learning the 26 letters that make up written words in English – and their typical arrangements in the structure of a character. This allows the broad but nonetheless

real underlying system to become apparent and engenders a sense of the patterns that are in the structures and meanings of the code. (While there are 400 components in total, some 25 make up 65 percent of the most commonly met characters.) In practice, however, after some basic instruction in the formation of early pictographic characters, students typically are taught and made to practise the basic pen strokes for writing characters. An English equivalent would be to concentrate on writing the individual strokes / - \ and | - | rather than on forming the letters A and H in which the strokes have been combined. The structure of a character is usually taught as an arrangement of components inside the box in three forms: from left to right, top to bottom and inside to outside (as in Line 1 and the first structure on Line 3 in Table 1). In fact these categories are still too broad to re-educate an eye used to the linear arrangement of letters and words. Research shows students taught this way learn to efficiently perceive characters internally structured horizontally, but are far less successful with the other structures shown in Table 1.[50] To develop full perceptual skills students need to be trained to notice variant structural subdivisions within these broad categories, some of which are shown in Table 1, such as the vertical + horizontal bottom, horizontal top + left or right vertical, as shown in Line 2, and the U-shaped, C-shaped and N-shaped structures in Line 3.

[50] Pei-Ying Lin and Ruth A. Childs, 'An Analysis of Orthographic Processing: non-Chinese and Chinese readers' visual-spatial concepts', in Jianguo Chen, Chuang Wang and Jinfa Cai (eds.), *Teaching and Learning Chinese Issues and Perspectives*, Chinese American Education Research and Development Association, pp.257-278, IAP-Information Age Publications, USA, 2010.

TABLE I: INTERNAL STRUCTURE OF CHARACTERS



Learning to write characters shows the true kindergarten level that must be returned to if Chinese is to be mastered, and many students find making the stiff stroke-by-stroke characters as tedious as an adult would find being made to write only in printed letters. Efforts are too often childishly uneven, with character components often out of proportion and dispiritingly ugly even after months of practice. Typing produces well-made characters but does not provide the tactile engagement needed to lay down a distinctive memory of characters that can often be very similar.

Literacy development takes time and innovative teaching methods. Ideally, the Romanised form of writing Chinese, called Pinyin, should be used as an effective interim pedagogic tool to support oral skills development, while characters are tackled as the independent system they are. Over time the two would come together. Native speaking teachers, however, most often see characters as the only source of language to be used in the classroom, irrespective of the nature of the task and the medium (oral or written). Teachers lack insight into learner issues and complain that students are lazy about learning characters but many students argue that they really do try but do not have sufficiently frequent or engaging encounters with many of the

characters being met to support their retention, and their memorising skills are very underdeveloped.

While script practice may continue as a discrete study for some time, students usually must begin assimilating dozens of new characters every week, writing down the new vocabulary they are learning in the spoken Chinese classes. Ordering the meeting of new characters to whatever words are used in speech means the introduction to characters is totally higgledy-piggledy in terms of their own internal system of components and structures. This adds considerably to the burden of the task and, it is suggested, is the main reason why total character acquisition for the end of secondary school Chinese in Australia is set at only 500 characters. This is primary Year 1 level in China, Hong Kong and Taiwan. About 4,000 are needed to read a newspaper and Year 12 students in China are expected to know more than 6,000 characters when they graduate.

Vocabulary

Mastering Chinese vocabulary is a considerably greater task than learning the vocabulary of another European language, due to specific features that make spoken Chinese words hard to grasp. Firstly, compared to English words and sounds, they are very short, many only two letters long, and they are comprised of only a small variety of sounds. Secondly, as a result of the small set of possible sounds, there is a huge number of homophones, all written with different characters but said exactly the same; thus many common words heard in speech might have three or four possible meanings, and, until tone becomes more clearly perceived, students may hear very large sets of words as all the same, for example, the word:

shī for 师 *teacher*

shí for 十 *ten*, 时 *time*, 食 *food*, and 识 *recognise*

shǐ for 使 *to make*, and

shì for 是 *is*, 视 *vision*, 事 *matter*, 试 *test* and 世 *world*.

Thirdly, Chinese words are hard to assimilate because they look unfamiliar: nearly 24 percent of them begin with the letters *x* or *y* or *z*, compared to only 0.6 percent of English words: the ratio of words beginning with the letter *x* in Chinese and English is 85:1. Fourthly, there are virtually no cognates, so every word must be learned new and then its character learned as well. A comparison between a typical Italian and Chinese list of words shows the incommensurate burden on the memory of English speakers learning Chinese (Table J).

TABLE J: VOCABULARY FOR SCHOOL SUBJECTS IN ITALIAN AND CHINESE

Italian	Spoken Chinese	Written Chinese
matematica	shùxué	数学
biologia	shēngwùxué	生物学
fisica	wùlǐxué	物理学
musica	yīnyuè	音乐
storia	lìshǐ	历史
danza	wǔdǎo	舞蹈
computer	jìsuànjī	计算机

Japanese, likewise, contains a great many cognates. The Tuttle dictionary lists some 4,000 cognates, not all of which have a reliable correspondence in meaning, but in everyday language there are about 1,500 which are generally what they sound like. Furthermore, borrowed words in Japanese script are spelled phonetically, thus if first met in written form, they can instantly be pronounced and if met first orally, they can instantly be written correctly (Table K).

TABLE K: TRANSLATION OF EVERYDAY VOCABULARY THAT ARE COGNATES IN JAPANESE BUT NOT CHINESE

English	Japanese	Chinese
cricket	kuriketto	板球 bǎnqiú
football (soccer)	sakkā	足球 zúqiú
basketball	basukettobōru	篮球 lánqiú
hockey	hokkē	曲棍球 qūgùnqiú
tennis	tenisu	网球 wǎngqiú
half time	haafu taimu	中场休息 zhōng chǎng xiūxí
kitchen	kitchin	厨房 chúfáng
table	teiburu	桌子 zhuōzi

While the teaching of tones and characters receives a great deal of attention, the challenge of Chinese vocabulary receives very little.

Grammar

There are some particularities about basic Chinese grammar that challenge an English speaking learner, but for the most part, although different from those encountered in European languages, they are no more demanding than the verb system of the Romance languages or the declension system of German and Slavic languages.

Among the most central grammatical challenges is learning to use language without tense markers, although the freedom that allows for rapid expansion of expression is always appreciated. In Chinese, if needed, the timing of an event is signalled adverbially (for example, *yesterday, next Saturday, when I was living in Taiyuan*). As well, regardless of when the action occurred, a small set of verb particles are used to show aspect: *I am about to do something; I am in the middle of doing it; I have done it / it's completed*. Chinese word order is similar to English, except in the case of relative clauses, where 'the man who came here yesterday' becomes 'the came here yesterday man'. Otherwise, learning a measure word for each noun (an extended system akin to 'a *slice* of cake', 'a *cup* of flour', 'a *set* of problems') is a chore, especially at first, and having no articles ('the', 'a') and no

word for 'Yes' leaves the learner feeling ungrounded for some time. Meanwhile, the system of modal particles (monosyllables such as *a, le, ne* and *ba*) supporting modal expression (doubt, persuasion) in a language where intonation is restricted by tone, is a competence rarely taught and rarely mastered.

Administration

The combination of challenges to the ear and the mouth, the eye and the hand, and the huge burden on memory of so many new, unfamiliar words plus their characters, means that mastery of Chinese by an English speaker takes about 3.5 times longer than mastery of a European language.[51] Yet, from kindergarten to university graduation, all language classes in educational institutions are scheduled in parallel. As well, most of the learning needs to tackle these challenges successfully are not recognised in resources and teaching practices rarely go beyond presenting perfect models of the language and asking students to reproduce them. Nothing is done to tackle the burden on memory of so much new language.

The poor teaching of Chinese is a result of three main factors. Firstly, there is the simple lack of recognition of the complexity of the tasks involved in learning Chinese by an English speaker. A second reason is the poor preparation of teachers, who are offered a generic course in languages method based on the teaching of European languages and taught by experts in European languages, so no issues relating specifically to Chinese are addressed. Thirdly, most teachers of Chinese are native speakers and often blind to the challenges of their language, unaware of the fundamental differences in what is needed to use Chinese and English competently. Like all native speakers, they are possessive about their language and, the evidence of continuing poor results notwithstanding, most believe they know what it takes to teach it. The fact is that these teachers have come through a very different educational system and most have little understanding of how to provide Australian students with strategies to deal with the specific language challenges of Chinese, and the hard work that

[51] American Foreign Service Institute rankings, retrieved June 1 2015 from <http://www.effectivelanguagelearning.com/language-guide/language-difficulty>.

learning it involves, in ways that stimulate intellectual interest, positive engagement and satisfying progress. The outcome is that only 2.5 percent of students who are learning Chinese at school are in Year 12[52] and, typically, about 50 percent of university non-background students drop out each year, with only some 12 percent of a starting cohort reaching third year, and fewer still fourth year.

To meet the challenges of Chinese successfully, students need teachers with deep linguistic knowledge of Chinese combined with penetrating understanding of the carefully-scaffolded learning tasks needed to gain entry to the new phonological, orthographic and morphological systems, and a repertoire of techniques for helping the learners shift from reliance on habits developed to conquer these systems in English and begin to work towards mastery of perception and production of Chinese. However, to date, the challenges of Chinese study are generally poorly understood by language teacher educators, teachers of Chinese, and those who produce Chinese teaching and learning resources. They are also under-researched by scholars. As a result, worldwide, Chinese is presented to learners much as another European language would be presented to them, with the expectation that they already have all the basic skills they need to learn it, just as they would for learning another European language. They do not, and a sense that they are trying to achieve the impossible is a very common deterrent to continuing the study of Chinese, in Australia and elsewhere in the Western world.

The positive news is that there have been significant developments in the teaching of Chinese in the past decade or so, many pioneered in Australia. If practices based on the understanding of the learning challenges of Chinese discussed in this section formed the content of teacher training courses and teaching practice, the outcomes would be very different. Achieving these outcomes requires targeted new resources providing sequenced teaching ideas for Chinese programs in the primary years, a new conceptual basis for continuing engagement with characters encountered in texts and authentic cultural resources that offer inter-culturally oriented exploration

[52] Data provided to this report by the Boards of Studies and educational sectors in each state.

of the linguistic and cultural features of contemporary Chinese communities, and opportunities to engage personally with their values and practices.

Chapter 6
Building Capacity

Development

Australia needs more people with Chinese language skills, working at all levels of Australian and Chinese society, creating deeper and lasting relationships between the two countries.

To reap the benefits of the recent expansion in Chinese language programs in terms of language capacity across the Australian workforce, the task is now to consolidate efforts to ensure more students not only continue with the language to the end of schooling but reach a higher standard than at present. It is suggested here that the target should be in the region of 12 percent in contrast to the current 2.5 percent. A clear pathway for some students to achieve a superior level of language proficiency so they can undertake part of their university studies in Chinese must also be available.

The key strategies to realise these goals require:

- Unblocking the path to success in Year 12 for non-Chinese background classroom learners at the same time as providing solid language education for all home speakers;

- Introducing a path for a super-proficient group of learners from Chinese and non-Chinese backgrounds who can become the specialist Sinologists needed to advise top levels of government, business and education; and

- Providing strong pre-service teacher education and ongoing professional development for all teachers of Chinese.

The achievement of these goals depends on addressing a number of weaknesses in the administration and teaching of Chinese.

Administrative Weaknesses

- There is no consensus across the country on the urgency of developing Chinese competence and no national project to assist such development;

- There is little integration of initiatives in Chinese language learning within individual states, let alone nationally;

- There is evidence everywhere of programs and initiatives begun with little understanding of the critical factors involved in the teaching and learning of Chinese; as a result, funds are not always spent as fruitfully and initiatives are often not nearly as productive as they might be, while many simply peter out;

- There needs to be greater encouragement for schools to establish more productive programs providing intensive learning opportunities in terms of frequency per week (three to five one-hour lessons) and immersion (mostly no English) style.

Teaching Weaknesses

Most teachers of Chinese in Australia grew up in an education system very different to the one they now teach in. Their difficulties in adapting to local norms are readily acknowledged by many of them, as well as by their teacher educators and by the principals in their schools. The problems they face are common to the field in all English speaking countries, and have been the target of much writing and research on intercultural contradictions in educational practices between Chinese and Western teachers.[53] The difficulties are the result of a combination of factors, including the general insensitivities of teachers to issues in learning their own language, the lack of research and research-informed resources to tackle the challenges of Chinese, and the lack of training available in teaching the special features of Chinese.

Many of these matters are outside the control of individual teachers, but certain very common pedagogical practices and professional attitudes among L1 speaking teachers of Chinese do lie within their powers to change in line with Australian professional standards and their doing so is critical to the progress of Australian students of the

[53] See for example, M. H. Haley and M. S. Ferro, 2011, 'Understanding the perceptions of Arabic and Chinese teachers toward transitioning into U.S. schools', *Foreign Language Annals*, vol. 44, issue 2, pp. 289–307; L. Grant, J. Strong, J., X. X. Xu and P. Popp (eds), 2013, *West Meets East Best Practices from Expert Teachers in the U.S. and China.* Alexandria, Va.: ASCD; X. F. Li, 2014, 'Reflection on Preservice Science Teacher Education in China and North America', in Wen Ma, *East Meets WestCrossing Chinese and American Borders*, New York and London: Teachers College Press.

language. Change in basic practices is never easy for anyone, and teachers of Chinese may need the assistance of school leaders, colleagues and teacher educators if they are to change these matters successfully, the most common being:

- too often using English, and immediately translating their own and students' Chinese into English;
- when errors are made, correcting the language not the learner: the teacher says or writes the correct form but does not investigate the thinking or skill weakness that caused the error, or check that their correction has been effective;
- introducing reading and writing in Chinese grounded in traditional primary L1 learner expectations and norms, not in factors present in the foreign learners' educational situation (see Chapter 5);
- omitting reflective practices such as talking about learning, which consolidate learning and lead students to a deeper intellectual appreciation of the nature of language and what is happening to them as they start their journey to becoming bilingual; and
- not speaking to students directly or not listening and responding directly to what they say or ask, which often leads to classroom disorder;
- in primary programs, simply presenting vocabulary-laden chunks of language (colours, numbers, domestic animals, school subjects) to be memorised each week with little development of language control.

Recommendations[54]

Improve retention and quality for learners in all streams:

- Encourage classroom learners to begin Chinese studies and ensure that they can continue to Year 12 and achieve high results in final examinations without competition from L1 and home speakers by making Chinese as a Second Language in Years 11 and 12 legally accessible to classroom learners only in all states;

- Provide L1 and home speakers students with quality courses to develop their Chinese for the benefit of themselves and the country.

Develop a cohort of high school graduates from among home speakers and classroom learners who are super-proficient in Chinese, to serve national security and development needs:

- Establish a national network of bilingual primary and secondary programs;

- Employ an expert Chinese language education team to provide professional support to the bilingual network, largely online.

Improve the quality of teachers and the number of L2 speaking teachers:

- In conjunction with university Faculties of Education, test all teacher candidates in English and Chinese and offer an incentive to non-background speakers with sufficient proficiency to train as teachers of Chinese;

- Provide pre- and in- service teachers with dedicated training in Chinese language teaching through a first and second stage certificate, taught nationally online;

- Introduce a teacher training certificate for those teaching L1 and home speaker levels.

54 A detailed budget for these proposals is provided at the end of this chapter.

Establish nationally what can be achieved by students at each level:

- Introduce a national test for students created in light of the Australian Curriculum for Chinese to provide a national benchmark which will permit teachers and students, school leaders and parents to be able to judge achievement against national standards.

Create resources which support language learning in line with the professional standards of the Australian Federation of Modern Language Teachers Associations:[55]

- Develop new resources aligned with the perspectives of the Australian Curriculum for Chinese: resources which teach not only linguistic items but also develop students' intellectual capability, bilingual perspective and capacity to mediate between two languages.

Monitor the progress of Chinese learning nationally.

ACTION STRATEGIES

Year 12

Making changes to the assessment regulations for the senior years is the single most urgent action needed to advance the learning of Chinese in Australia.

While implementing such changes is a matter for each state and territory, national consensus is needed on the goal of the L2 Chinese subject and the wording of eligibility criteria for taking it.

A further reason for expediting changes to courses and eligibility requirements is that they need to be gazetted three years in advance of being operationalised in Year 12. With 75 percent of the current national number of Year 12 students of Chinese, Victoria's participation in this development is critical.

[55] <http://afmlta.asn.au/professional-standards/>.

The Australian Curriculum for Chinese provides three streams of study from F to Year 10. In some states the same three distinct types of student are also recognised and catered for by the Boards of Study and Curriculum Authorities in charge of study in Years 11 and 12, while all states and territories provide for an L1 and an L2 stream. To ensure a clear path of study and potential achievement to the end of Year 12 for students across the country, the three divisions should be adopted in all states for Years 11 and 12. In the states and territories which so far do not have a separate subject for the home speakers, a new subject would need to be created. While each state could develop their subject independently, all subjects for this type of student should reflect understanding of the complexity of the home speaker group and clearly target the work they need to develop linguistic proficiency and a stable, bilingual, bicultural identity. Consideration will also need to be made in such courses of the needs of the small but important number of Australian returnees who have had significant experience in the language after living and attending school in a Chinese-speaking culture. It is also essential that those who teach these students have received solid training in the task.

Because local L1 learners – those who did a year or two only of secondary schooling in a Chinese society – must compete with incoming and non-resident international students who have done four or even six years of secondary, it is also important that their course develop their language richly and efficiently. For this to occur, those who teach them need to be soundly trained.

Superior Proficiency

There is an acute national need to develop a sustainable F to Year 12 bilingual / immersion track program which would allow a cohort of students with superior proficiency to enter university each year with the reading and writing skills to be able to study content subjects in Chinese competently and the listening and speaking skills to enable them to understand lectures and take part in debates over content. To achieve this, a program needs to be set up over the next 10 years with guaranteed funding for two entire school cohorts (26 years).

Twenty four students is the number of students per class at which state funding meets the cost of provision. To ensure 24 students annually entering Year 7, a secondary bilingual program would need to have three primary feeder schools, each comprising around 24 students per year level. This is a realistic expectation, based on the understanding that a certain number of parents will want their child to go to an independent secondary school; a certain number may want their child to learn another language in secondary that the family has affiliation with; and a certain number of students will simply not wish to continue in such an intensive Chinese program, whether or not they continue with Chinese. Thus in each state involved the program would comprise:

- 3 x F to Year 6 government school primary programs; and
- 1 x 7 to Year 12 government school secondary program.

Due to cost and the need to ensure numbers, in all probability, such a program would only be feasible in the large cities of two or three Australian states.

The programs from F to Year 9 would provide school study taught partly in English and partly in Chinese at a ratio of 60 to 40 percent or 50 to 50 percent. English, their first language and the language of the society and school in which they live and study, will remain the stronger of their two languages and the one in which they can achieve the greatest intellectual development. Thus at the higher secondary levels (Years 10 to 12), the bilingual ratio would decrease to 20 to 80 percent English to Chinese to ensure sufficient time is spent on development of a deep, active, intellectual vocabulary and discourse control in English; while still maintaining and developing their increasingly deeper grip on Chinese.

The primary bilingual programs would ensure that all broad areas of the curriculum were taught in both languages, but targeting separate topics within each field. In secondary, the experience of Auburn High School in Victoria shows that Science and Social Studies lend themselves well to being taught in Chinese. These programs in Chinese are very new for all involved and under-resourced. The work

needed to create even one unit of study is considerable, especially in the initial years. If re-used, the Auburn work on choice and language analysis of texts, the detailed teaching plans and resources found and created for existing programs, would make a substantial contribution to the viability and success of any new program.

The few bilingual Chinese programs in existence in Australia, one very successful Chinese-English bilingual program in an F to Year 12 school in Hong Kong, and the many such programs in the United States, show that to remain viable, high quality intensive bilingual language programs need constant teacher support in the form of:

- on-going professional development through coaching and instruction;
- collaboration in the preparation of curriculum, lessons and resources; and
- a centre where ideas and problems can be aired and heard, and help provided.[56]

In Australia the programs could be supported by a Bilingual Chinese Network run by experienced Chinese bilingual educators who can assist with planning, resources, and organising professional development activities.

The experience of the Chinese Teacher Training Centre (CTTC) at the University of Melbourne between 2009 and 2015 in offering national professional development and an online chatroom showed this kind of support could be provided very effectively using the internet. Online communication could be combined with periodic visits to schools and an annual day together, which could be added to the Chinese teachers' annual conference.

The cost of a single, seven level (F to Year 6) bilingual language program can be as much as $500,000 per annum. A 12-school program of four schools operating fully across all levels in three

[56] See for example the many publications from the Centre for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition, University of Minnesota, USA, <http://www.carla.umn.edu/immersion/index.html>.

states would cost $6,000,000 per annum. From the very beginning, much of this money would already be provided by the usual state Department of Education contribution to all of the schools, and the nearer the class numbers were to 24, the lower the cost per school would be.

Given the commitment required and the need to coordinate three primary schools within reasonable proximity to a secondary school, it would be wise to make an open invitation to consortia of schools to apply to form a State Bilingual Chinese Network. At present in Victoria there are two primary schools teaching at the proposed intensity from F to Year 6, and a secondary school which is currently reducing its commitment because of a lack of funds due to small enrolments in the start-up years. There is also one secondary school in Queensland and one primary school in each of New South Wales, South Australia and Western Australia using forms of immersion and content learning in Chinese. In addition to each cluster being well organised and cooperative from the beginning, schools hosting these programs need to be able to offer strong general programs. Once operating, it is anticipated that there would be a steady flow of enrolments, but such a new idea to schools and parents would need strong support in the early years to ensure programs not fully enrolled were, nonetheless, well taught and allowed to demonstrate what can be achieved. A maximum subsidy of $180,000 per year should be sufficient to allow a school which is ready to begin commitment to a bilingual program to manage its additional costs during the start-up years.

On top of the costs of direct support to the Bilingual Network schools, there would be the costs for teacher coaching and professional development and curriculum and resources development, which are estimated at $427,000 per year to cover staff salaries, overheads, and a small amount of in-country travel. This assumes the recurring need for teacher development as programs expand and vacancies need to be filled due to teachers going on various forms of leave.[57]

Resources created would be shared across the programs and also made available to programs outside the network. This would

[57] Consultation with principals in existing programs and the author's experience of running the Chinese Teacher Training Centre for the past six years have been drawn on in calculating these costs.

make efficient and fruitful use of the materials produced from the expenditure on the project and contribute to better teaching of Chinese more widely.

Improving the Quality of Teaching

It is hardly a revolutionary proposition to suggest that teachers of Chinese at all levels should be trained for their task. Vetting candidates at entry and providing specific training for teachers of Chinese aligns with the recommendations of the 2014 Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group report.[58] Recommendation 10, for example, proposes that:

> Higher education providers select the best candidates into teaching using sophisticated approaches that ensure initial teacher education students possess the required academic skills and personal characteristics to become a successful teacher.

Key Proposal 3 states:

> Pre-service teachers must develop a thorough knowledge of the content they will go on to teach, and a solid understanding of teaching practices that are proven to make a difference to student learning. Professional experience placements must provide real opportunities for pre-service teachers to integrate theory and practice.

In line with language teaching standards in Australia and around the world, pre- and in-service teachers of Chinese need to:

- Know their language from the learners' perspective and appreciate the nature of the learning challenges it presents; have a repertoire of techniques to assist with the challenges;
- Develop a style of language teaching that incorporates reflection, only makes use of English for reflective activities, and treats student error as a point to investigate;

[58] Australian Government, *Action Now: Classroom Ready Teachers*, 2014, <https://docs.education.gov.au/documents/action-now-classroom-ready-teachers-report>.

- Develop a firm but warm, collaborative relationship with students;

- Train in practical methods and productive strategies for classroom management that are feasible for them to use; and

- In primary, learn how to introduce a coherent sequence of meaningful activities run in Chinese, such as games, stories, crafts and content learning (for example about the natural world and using electronic devices).

As discussed in Chapter 5, the learning of Chinese presents some very particular challenges to English speakers compared to the learning of another European language. Australian universities do not have appropriately qualified staff to teach individual Chinese pedagogy courses; this is a course which could be offered nationally online. Online course development is expensive, but much of the basic coursework required for teaching oral skills, literacy and culture, as well as using ICT and teaching Chinese at primary level, was developed with NALSSP funds for the CTTC's Professional Certificate in Chinese Language Teaching. The course is computer, tablet and phone compatible. Intended originally as an in-service training program, it nevertheless would make a substantial base on which just an additional two units at the entry to language teaching level need to be developed. The CTTC also made a start on a similarly designed training program for teachers of home speakers.

The cost of bringing both these programs to presentation state would be in the order of $100,000.

In line with standards set by the Australian Federation of Modern Language Teachers Associations, and increasingly with practice overseas, it is proposed that Faculties of Education should be required to test the proficiency of prospective language teachers in their target language and in English before they are accepted into teaching degrees. This does not have to be an elaborate or expensive process. It can be done as a normal part of enrolment, on Skype, or by submission of a video of the candidate performing a required task.

Establishing What Can Be Achieved

Establishing national benchmarks as to what can be expected of students of Chinese at various levels would make a substantial contribution to ensuring the sharing of accountability for quality outcomes and retention at all levels. At present no monitoring is done in any state or territory to see how many primary learners continue Chinese studies at secondary level, or if certain programs are able to achieve significantly higher retention or proficiency levels than comparable programs, and if so, the reasons for this. It is particularly important, in later primary and early secondary years where the majority of students of Chinese are enrolled, to provide explicit, high-quality and realistic benchmarks that all teachers can aim to meet.

At present the Australian Council for Educational Research holds an annual test of Listening and Reading Comprehension in Chinese and other languages.[59] These tests are in a standardised single-item response format designed to align with current textbooks and seek no evidence of social capability, only of textbook learning. They could, however, be used as part of a national test of Year 6 and 8 students, complemented by a newly-designed test of integrated speaking and listening skills. Creating new tests at these two levels would cost in the order of $300,000, with variations in subsequent years an additional cost of perhaps $100,000. The cost of administering face-to-face tests to the 30,000 or so students currently at these levels would be in the order of $80 per candidate. This cost could be shared among the states, schools and students, just as the ACER tests are.

Creating Resources

The Australian Curriculum for Languages has introduced developments in the teaching of languages which need to be reflected in new resources that suit the Australian context. In particular, there is a need to create resources that address the more bilingual, bicultural reflective work on language and identity that are now part of the study of a language; work that, for example, compares how the two languages have evolved different systems to deal with common communicative problems or leads students to examine the influence that knowing

[59] Assessment of Languages Competence, ACER, Victoria, annually from 1994.

the one language has on their use of the other. These new resources would help teachers move beyond the current resources, which to a large extent actually run counter to the key tenets of the Australian Curriculum for Languages. Exercises in development of the cognitive skills needed for successfully tackling Chinese literacy, so crucial to eventual mastery of the language, are especially lacking.

At the same time there has been a large increase in the number of primary students learning Chinese. Their teachers constantly request existing online resources for young learners be gathered on a site like the Language Learning Space,[60] and that new resources be designed to support the huge burden on memory made by a language with no cognates and new characters for every syllable, and help engage students in the language.

A funding program of $300,000 would be needed for the development of new teaching resources, with contracting to be at national level to avoid duplication and ensure quality.

Monitoring the New Initiatives

All educational sectors monitor certain aspects of their language courses and make data available to government statisticians. In order to keep track of progress in developing Chinese language in schools, as was the case during the NALSSP program, a federal request should be made that data gathered include information on the critical factors in Chinese language education: number of schools, programs and teachers; numbers enrolled; the home language background of each student (Chinese or not, and if Chinese, which dialect / language); how many students continue and how many drop out, and at what point they drop out.

Only New South Wales currently collects data on the background of its students of Chinese (although only in primary). While valuable, the information requested about the students, however, does not include what is actually needed to maximise the benefit of the exercise as there is no breakdown of Chinese background students into whether they are from a family speaking Modern Standard Chinese or other

[60] <http://www.lls.edu.au>.

Chinese dialect / language, or no Chinese language at all. The current NSW practice does, however, put to rest concerns raised by some in response to enquiries for this report that it might be discriminatory to ask a student's language and ethnic background. Asking about home language in order to be able to provide students with the most suitable and fruitful language education possible should be no different to asking students who can swim and who cannot so all can use time at the swimming pool safely and effectively. It is simply common sense and in their interests.

There needs to be a small executive body – a National Chinese Language Development Committee – with overarching responsibility for initiating the projects described here, contracting tasks and monitoring development. The members of this group would be informed stakeholders in the field of Chinese language education and school systems. The committee would be chaired by the federal Department of Education and Training, and the suggested areas to be represented are listed below. Although the pool of experts in Chinese language education in Australia is not large, there is considerable expertise available across the country. In some cases, sections of the field and individuals who would appear to best meet the criteria for the Committee have been nominated with supporting evidence:

Representatives	Invitation to
Federal Department of Education and Training representative, Chair	
Chinese language teacher education	Melbourne Graduate School of Education, which ran the CTTC for six years
State Education Departments	Victoria, where 50% of Chinese language learners reside
Board of Studies / Curriculum Authorities	NSW, who have led the way on Year 12 reform
Australian Curriculum for Chinese	NT Department of Education and Australian Curriculum for Chinese writer Marnie Foster
AFMLTA	Vice President Andrew Scrimgeour (UniSA) – one of Australia's most experienced Chinese teachers, teacher educator, scholar, and writer of Australian Curriculum for Chinese
Primary languages	WA Department of Education primary Chinese bilingual program principal

Confucius Institutes	Queensland Director (QUT)
Chinese Language Teachers Federation of Australia	President, also representative of (private) L1 Chinese schools in the ACT
Tertiary Sector Chinese	UNE Dr Isabel Tasker, coordinator of Chinese; award winning expert language teacher, resources developer, online and ICT specialist

Each committee member would be expected to represent their sector and to consult regularly within it. The committee would initiate discussion with the Boards of Studies / Assessment Authorities to resolve the continuing problems with Year 12 subject division regulations and work to ensure Faculties of Education test the language proficiency in English and Chinese of prospective Chinese language teachers. The committee's discussions could normally be conducted online, including teleconferencing for most meetings; some administrative assistance would be needed.

The federal Department of Education and Training's statistics section would collate and analyse data on student numbers on an annual basis.

Budget

As the budget set out below shows, the overall costs for a multi-faceted project to build on the recent advances, fill the gaps and extend Chinese language capacity in Australian schools are modest. Recurrent costs could be well less than $1 million per annum and the maximum needed while the bilingual program was begun would not reach $3 million per annum.

Strategy	Item	Details	Development costs	Recurrent costs
Teacher training	Certificate I for pre-service and existing teachers Certificate II for pre-service and existing teachers	Development of one novice-level 12.5 point subject using existing online template. (a choice of four from existing five x 6.25 subjects for professional development of in-service teachers). Instructional content embedded in a flexible program for teaching online which allows linked units of study and the uploading, sharing and moving of files of all kinds.	Curriculum development: $35,000 Technical development: $15,000	
	Certificate III for teachers of home speaker and L1 learners	Development of two x 12.5 point subjects for professional development of pre-service teachers (available also to in-service teachers as additional study) using existing on-line template. Instructional content embedded in a flexible program for teaching online which allows linked units of study and the uploading, sharing and moving of files of all kinds.	Curriculum development: $35,000 Technical development: $15,000	
		TEACHER TRAINING TOTAL	**$100,000**	**University award courses, funded from student fees**

Strategy	Item	Details	Development costs	Recurrent costs
Resources development	1. Primary curriculum 2. Resources for introducing the Chinese character system 3. Authentic texts for study of contemporary Chinese culture	Mixed media guide to curriculum planning and teaching practice for primary Chinese. An integrated sequence of resources for introducing the Chinese character system accurately, comprehensively, and efficiently to primary and secondary learners. A collection of contemporary authentic texts to engage early secondary students in inter-cultural exploration of linguistic and cultural features.	$100,000 $100,000 $100,000	
		RESOURCES TOTAL OVER 3 YEARS	**$300,000**	
Testing	Year 6 and Year 8 Language Speaking and Writing tests	Development and trialling	$300,000	
	Development of alternate years test questions	30,00 students @ $80 per candidate to be shared with States, schools and students		$100,000
	Test administration			$240,000
		TOTAL TEST COSTS	**$300,000**	**$340,000**
Development Committee	Six stakeholder representatives capable of initiating and monitoring the projects	Meetings to be held mostly online Administration Assistant (HEW 5) (0.2FTE) Office space, overheads, IT support and accounting Travel	 	 $25,991 $45,000 $10,000
		TOTAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE		**$80,000**

Strategy	Item	Details	Development costs	Recurrent costs
Bilingual networks development and support	**Sample staffing:** Director (Level C 0.2FTE) Program Executive (Level B) Casual teachers Administration assistant (HEW 5, 0.2FTE) Travel & incidentals Office and facility costs (IT / web support, financial and accounting, IT equipment)	**Shared staff tasks:** 1. Run online weekly support for each school and cluster. 2. Provide expert professional development, coaching and consultation. 3. Guide and assist in curriculum planning and resources development. 4. Coordinate communication among cluster teachers and administration.		$45,000 $231,163 $50,000 $25,991 $10,000 $65,000
		TOTAL ANNUAL RECURRENT COSTS		**$427,154**
Direct support to bilingual schools	Schools would need staggered amounts of support depending on how many levels they were offering from the start, and how many students they could enrol at each level. Only one secondary school would be operating in the first three or four years, or even longer.	Maximum total annual recurrent costs of $180,000 per school x 12 2017 – six schools 2018 – nine or 10 schools 2023 – 12 schools		$1,080,000 max. $1,800,000 max. $2,160,000 max.

INVESTMENT		
One-off costs	Teacher training	$100,000
	Resources	$300,000
	Test creation	$300,000
	TOTAL	**$700,000**

One-off costs outlay	2017	$350,000
	2018	$250,000
	2019	$100,000
	TOTAL	**$700,000**

Annual recurrent costs	Executive Committee (to commence second half of 2016)	$80,000
	Test (max.)	$150,000
	Bilingual program support	$427,154
	Direct support to bilingual schools (average)	$1,800,000
	TOTAL	**$2,457,154**

Expected annual costs outlay*	2017	**$2,807,154**
	2018	**$2,707,154**
	2019	**$2,557,154**
	2020 - 2023 (maximum amount)	**$2,457,154**

* The aim would be to stagger bilingual school start-ups and have all schools self-sufficient within three years of commencement of their bilingual program. From 2023 onwards, for Development Committee, test revision, bilingual program support (coaching and professional development for teachers; curriculum and resources development), the anticipated annual cost is $657,154 + direct bilingual schools costs of up to $180,000 per school.

CONCLUSION

This reports recommends that federal parliament adopt building Chinese language capacity as a long-term, bipartisan, national project. It should recognise the advances made since 2008, acknowledge the continuing gaps in provision and progress described in this report, and assign implementation of the recommendations outlined here over the next 26 years to the federal Department of Education and Training.

A small executive committee – National Chinese Language Development Committee – of informed representative stakeholders should be established and supported by the Department of Education and Training to tender, contract and monitor the project strategies and ensure that any modifications proposed adhere to the framework and do not inadvertently attempt changes that are likely to fail when viewed from the broader perspective of the national project.

Project activities need to be implemented with some urgency. Projects would be offered by tender and assigned to those who demonstrably could undertake them to the highest degree of success, and then carefully monitored and the results made public.

The premises on which these proposals are put forward rest on the data provided for this report. They show that a start has been made in extending and improving provision of Chinese programs and learning opportunities, and that much of what is needed to successfully build Chinese language capacity in Australia is already known. This knowledge could be disseminated and implemented quite simply if a disciplined, informed approach were taken. Much of what needs to be implemented can occur within existing structures, but not within existing budgets, and not without the express recognition of the need for it and broad commitment to its success at national level. It would also need clear bipartisan support to survive electoral cycles and cooperative state-federal and state-state relationships based on an understanding that it is a cooperative project essential to the long-term benefit of the whole country.

A report on Chinese language education at this time is useful because it reveals both the progress made since the CLEAS report (2008/2010) examined Chinese learning across the nation's schools, and the gaps that diminish the effectiveness of what has been invested in as a result of that report.

A relatively small amount of funding is needed to address continuing problems which work against a sufficient number of Australian students graduating with basic competence in Chinese as well as a further group graduating with a sound base on which to build during post-secondary study and training.

Finally, a relatively small continuing investment will be required to ensure that the hitherto unacknowledged need for an assured super-proficient cohort of learners of Chinese language who will graduate from secondary able to enter higher study in substantive fields in Chinese, is met and maintained, thus providing the capacity for independent information gathering and analysis.

Scholars consulted for this report agree on two key issues. First, Australia has yet to fully recognise the redefinition of economic and political life as China emerges as a regional and world power; and second, flowing from this, the need for a far greater number of Australians from all backgrounds, in a wide range of fields and occupations, who are capable of effectively engaging with China and its people. First acknowledged by Robert Menzies close to 80 years ago, the need for Australia to make its own way in international relations has never been greater. Building Chinese language capacity is an integral part of this development. It needs urgent, consistent and nationally-coordinated attention.

Appendix A: State Data in Tables and Charts

Compiled by Jo-anne Hughson

Note:
No data = data have not been provided / are not kept
0 = there are no items in this category

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

TABLE 1: NUMBER OF SCHOOLS OFFERING CHINESE

	Primary	Secondary	College	Total
ACT-GOVT	5 (2015)	5 (2015)	7 (2015)	**17 (2015)**
ACT-IND	2 (2015)	4 (2015)	2 (2015)	**8 (2015)**
ACT-CATH	0 (2014)	2 (2014)	0 (2014)	**2 (2014)**

TABLE 2: NUMBER OF STUDENTS STUDYING CHINESE

	Primary (K-7)	Secondary (Years 8-10)	College (All)	Year 12	Total
ACT-GOVT	1,048 (2015)	231 (2015)	267 (2015)	139 (2015)	**1,746 (2015)**
ACT-IND	No data	No data	No data	30 (2015)	**No data**
ACT-CATH	0 (2014)	50 (2014)	0 (2014)	0 (2014)	**50 (2014)**

CHART 1: NUMBER OF SCHOOLS OFFERING CHINESE IN 2008 AND 2015 BY SECTOR

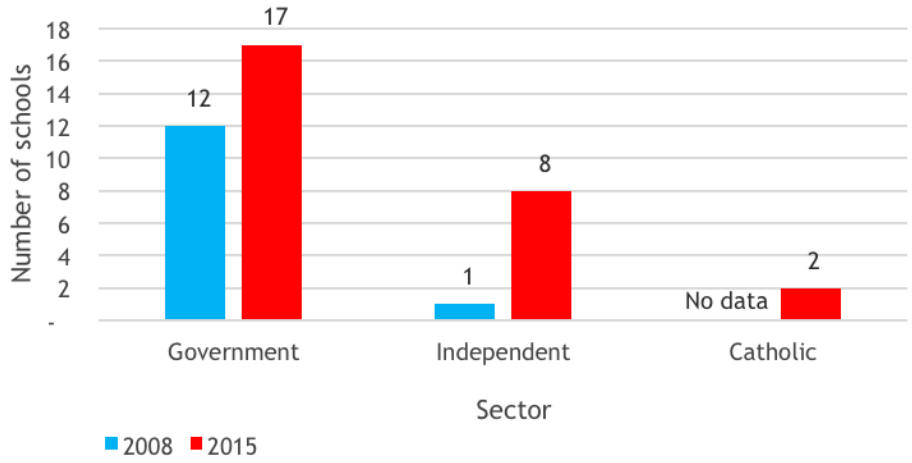


CHART 2: TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS (PRIMARY AND SECONDARY) STUDYING CHINESE IN 2008 AND 2015 BY SECTOR

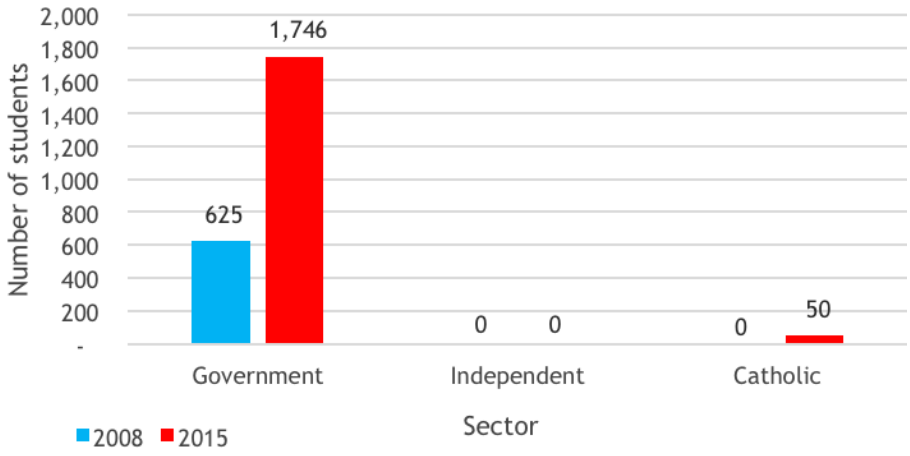
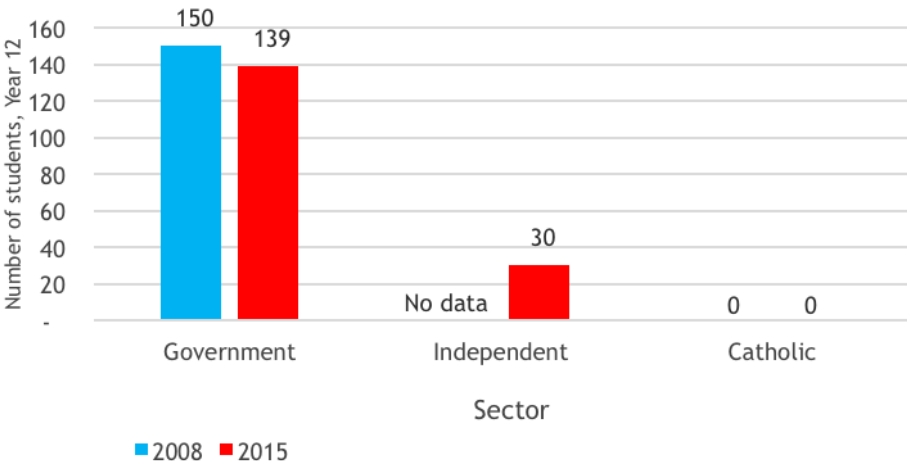


CHART 3: NUMBER OF YEAR 12 STUDENTS STUDYING CHINESE IN 2008 AND 2015 BY SECTOR



NEW SOUTH WALES

TABLE 3: NUMBER OF SCHOOLS OFFERING CHINESE

	Primary	Secondary	Total
NSW-GOVT	92 (2015)	70 (2015)	**162 (2015)**
NSW-IND	No data	No data	**40 (2015)**
NSW-CATH	2 (2015)	8 (2015)	**10 (2015)**

TABLE 4: NUMBER OF STUDENTS STUDYING CHINESE

	Primary	Secondary (All)	Year 12	Total
NSW-GOVT	19,844 (2014)	8,766 (2014)	648 (2014)	**28,610**
NSW-IND	4,496 (2012)	No data	193 (2013)	**No data**
NSW-CATH	No data	No data	103 (2013)	**No data**

CHART 4: NUMBER OF SCHOOLS OFFERING CHINESE IN 2008 AND 2015

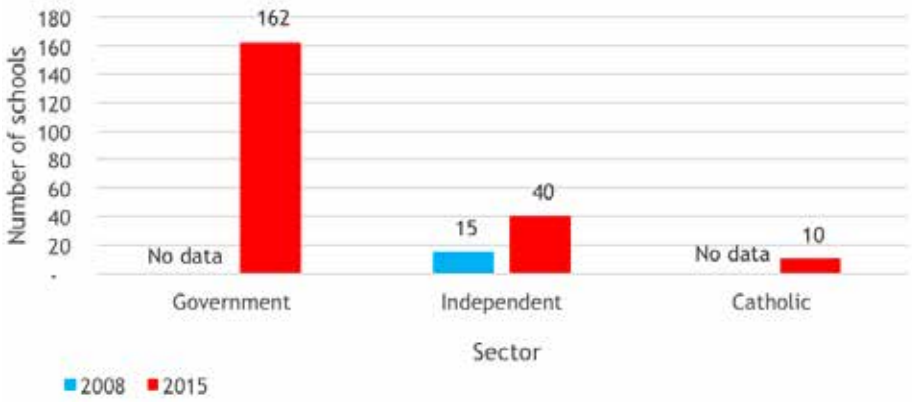


CHART 5: TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS (PRIMARY AND SECONDARY) STUDYING CHINESE IN 2008 AND 2015 BY SECTOR

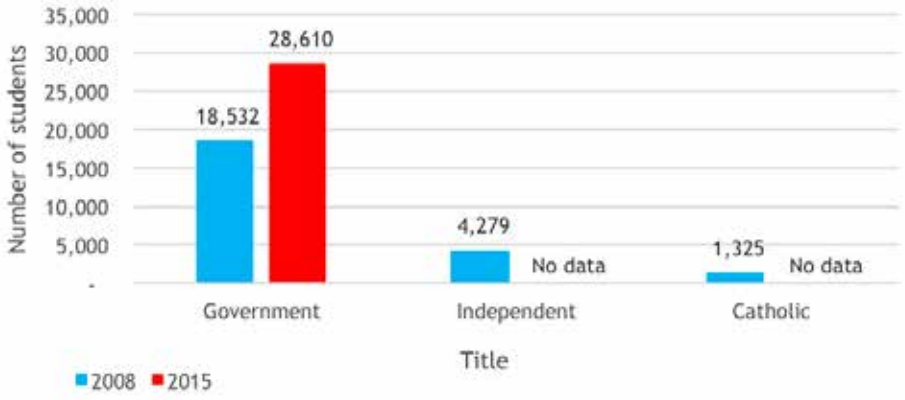
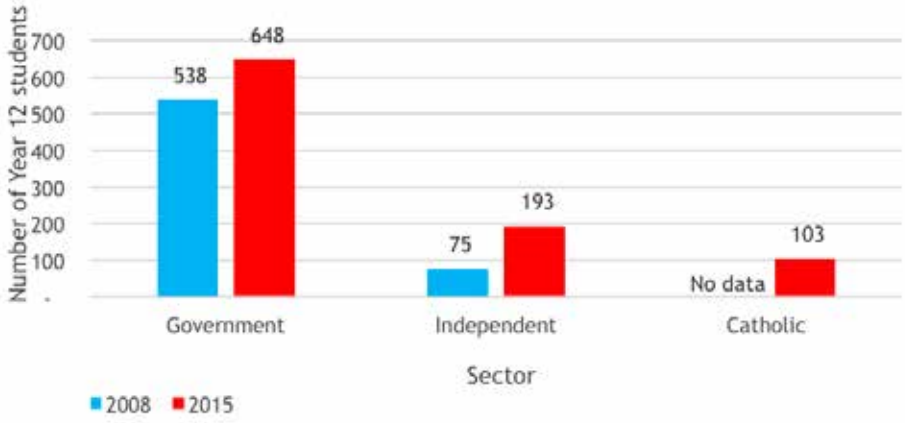


CHART 6: NUMBER OF YEAR 12 STUDENTS STUDYING CHINESE IN 2008 AND 2015 BY SECTOR



NORTHERN TERRITORY

TABLE 5: NUMBER OF SCHOOLS OFFERING CHINESE (2015)

	Primary	Secondary	Total
NT-GOVT	12	2	**15**
NT-IND	1	1	**2**
NT-CATH	0	0	**0**

TABLE 6: NUMBER OF STUDENTS STUDYING CHINESE (2015)

	Primary	Secondary (All)	Year 12	Total
NT-GOVT	398	118	17	**516**
NT-IND	73	43	1	**116**
NT-CATH	0	0	0	**0**

CHART 7: NUMBER OF SCHOOLS OFFERING CHINESE (2008 AND 2015)

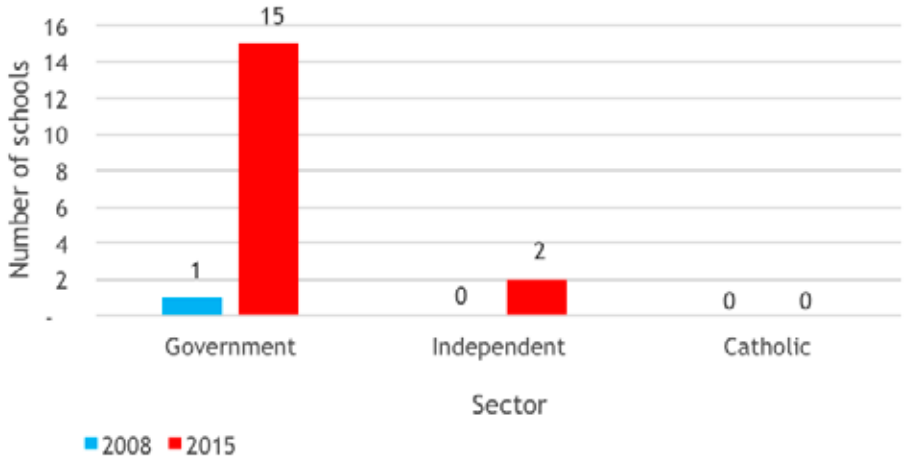


CHART 8: TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS (PRIMARY AND SECONDARY) STUDYING CHINESE IN 2008 AND 2015 BY SECTOR

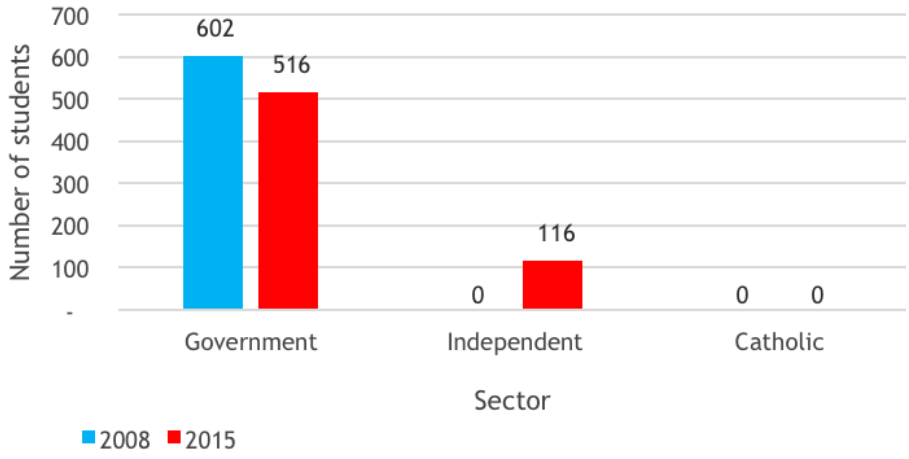
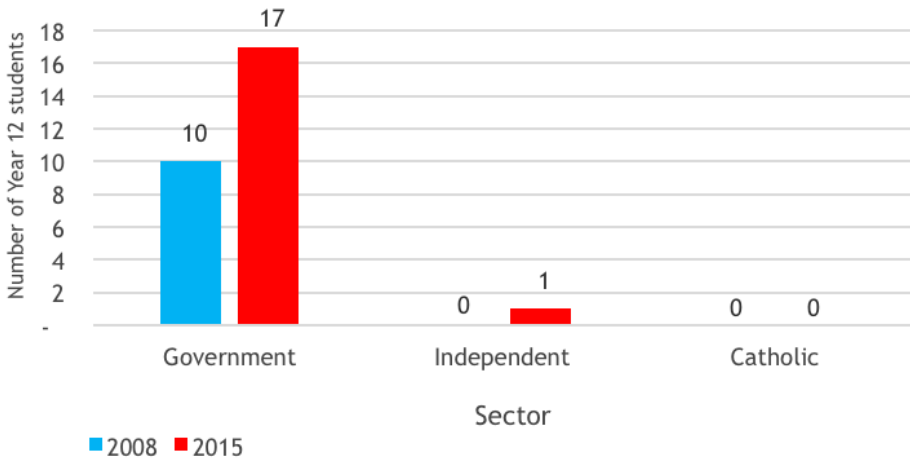


CHART 9: NUMBER OF YEAR 12 STUDENTS STUDYING CHINESE IN 2008 AND 2015 BY SECTOR



QUEENSLAND
(Note: Year 7 was part of primary until 2015)w

TABLE 7: NUMBER OF SCHOOLS OFFERING CHINESE

	Primary	Secondary	Total
QLD-DET	93 (2015)	44 (2015)	**137 (2015)**
QLD-AIS	27 (2014)	26 (2014)	**53 (2014)**
QLD-CEO	7 (2015)	5 (2015)	**12 (2015)**

TABLE 8: NUMBER OF STUDENTS STUDYING CHINESE

	Primary	Secondary (all)	Year 12	Total
QLD-GOVT	17,074 (2015)	6,830 (2015)	386 (2015)	**23,904 (2015)**
QLD-IND	7,439 (2014)	1,875 (2014)	186 (2014)	**9,201 (2014)**
QLD-CATH	1,029 (2015)	863 (2015)	17 (2015)	**1,892 (2015)**

CHART 10: NUMBER OF SCHOOLS OFFERING CHINESE IN 2008 AND 2015

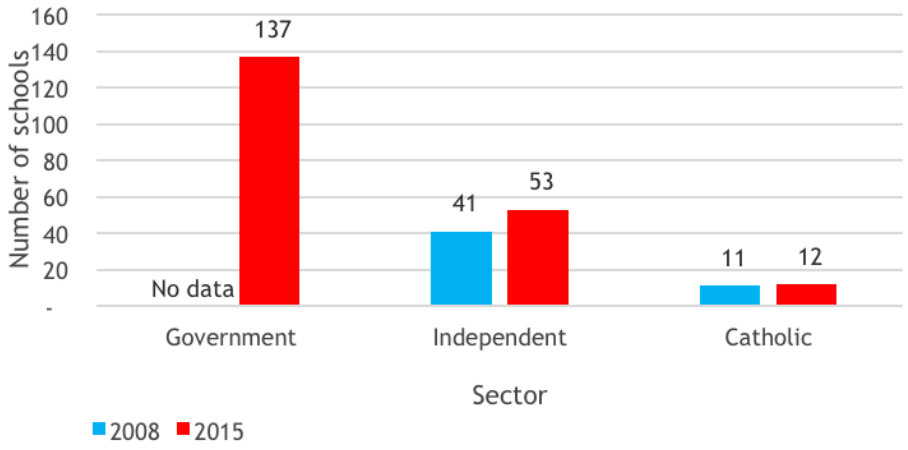


CHART 11: TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS (PRIMARY AND SECONDARY) STUDYING CHINESE IN 2008 AND 2015 BY SECTOR

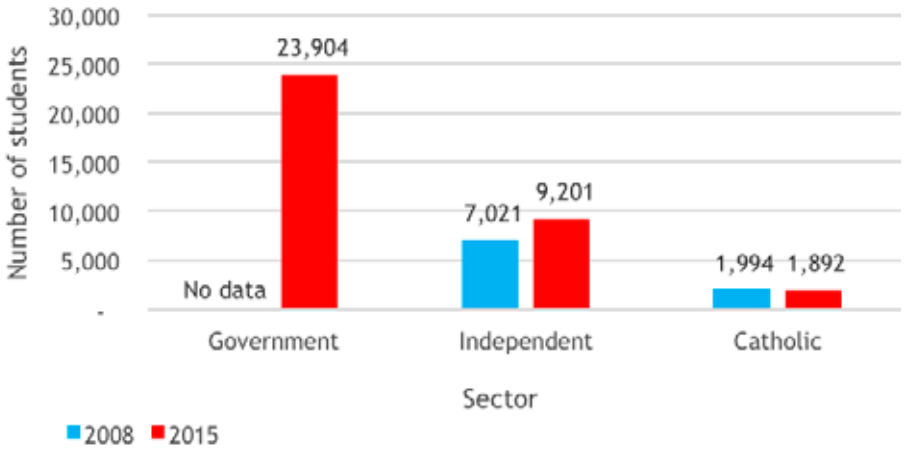
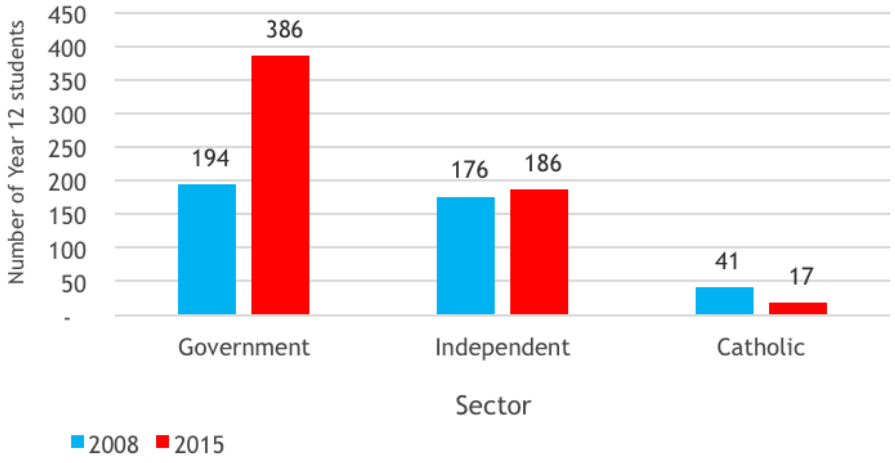


CHART 12: NUMBER OF YEAR 12 STUDENTS STUDYING CHINESE IN 2008 AND 2015 BY SECTOR



SOUTH AUSTRALIA

TABLE 9: NUMBER OF SCHOOLS OFFERING CHINESE

	Primary (R-7)	Secondary (8-12)	Total
SA-GOVT	23 (2015)	17 (2015)	**40 (2015)**
SA-IND	5 (2015)	12 (2015)	**17 (2015)**
SA-CATH	12 (2014)	10 (2014)	**22 (2014)**

TABLE 10: NUMBER OF STUDENTS STUDYING CHINESE

	Primary (R-7)	Secondary (All)	Year 12	Total
SA-GOVT	5,081 (2015)	1,313 (2015)	125 (2015)	**6,394 (2015)**
SA-IND	No data	No data	59 (2014)	**No data**
SA-CATH	2,745 (2014)	469 (2014)	11 (2014)	**3,214 (2014)**

CHART 13: NUMBER OF SCHOOLS OFFERING CHINESE IN 2008 AND 2015

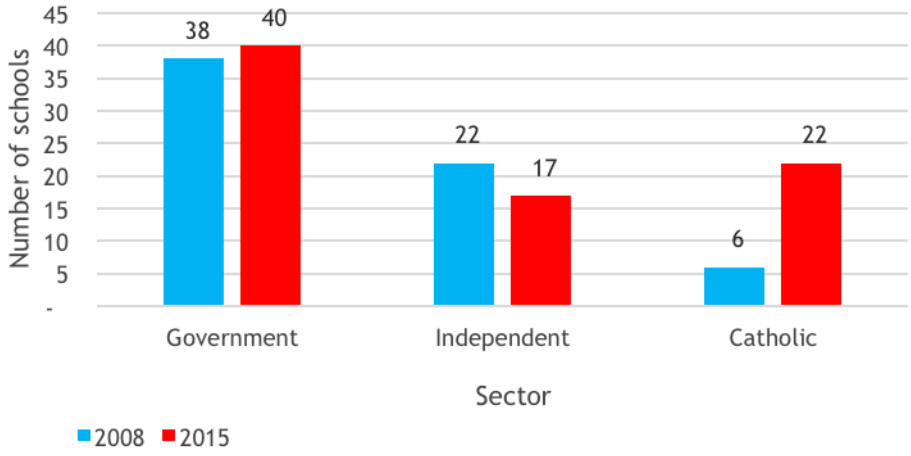


CHART 14: TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS (PRIMARY AND SECONDARY) STUDYING CHINESE IN 2008 AND 2015 BY SECTOR

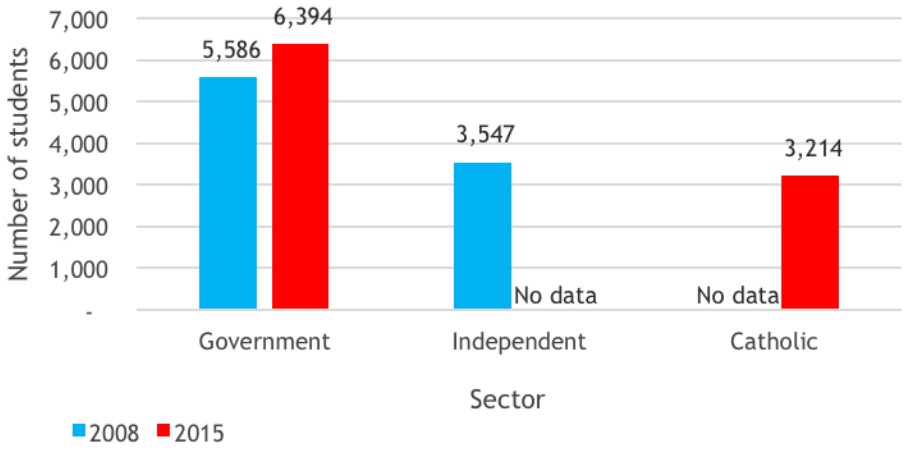
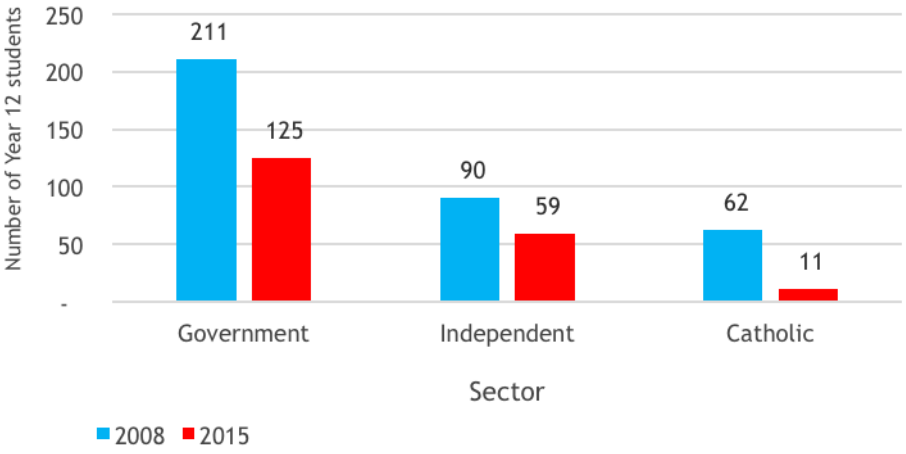


CHART 15: NUMBER OF YEAR 12 STUDENTS STUDYING CHINESE IN 2008 AND 2015 BY SECTOR



TASMANIA

TABLE 11: NUMBER OF SCHOOLS OFFERING CHINESE

	Primary	Secondary (7-10)	Senior Secondary (11-12)	Total
TAS-GOVT	12 (2015)	13 (2015)	6 (2015)	**31 (2015)**
TAS-IND	4 (2013)	4 (2013)	3 (2013)	**8 (2013)**
TAS-CATH	0 (2015)	2 (2015)	0 (2015)	**2 (2015)**

TABLE 12: NUMBER OF STUDENTS STUDYING CHINESE

	Primary	Secondary (7-10)	Senior Secondary (11-12)	Year 12	Total
TAS-GOVT	1,386 (2015)	836 (2015)	96 (2015)	36 (2015)	**2,318 (2015)**
TAS-IND	402 (2013)	493 (2013)	35 (2013)	6 (2013)	**930 (2013)**
TAS-CATH	0 (2015)	253 (2015)	0 (2015)	0 (2015)	**253 (2015)**

CHART 16: NUMBER OF SCHOOLS OFFERING CHINESE IN 2008 AND 2015

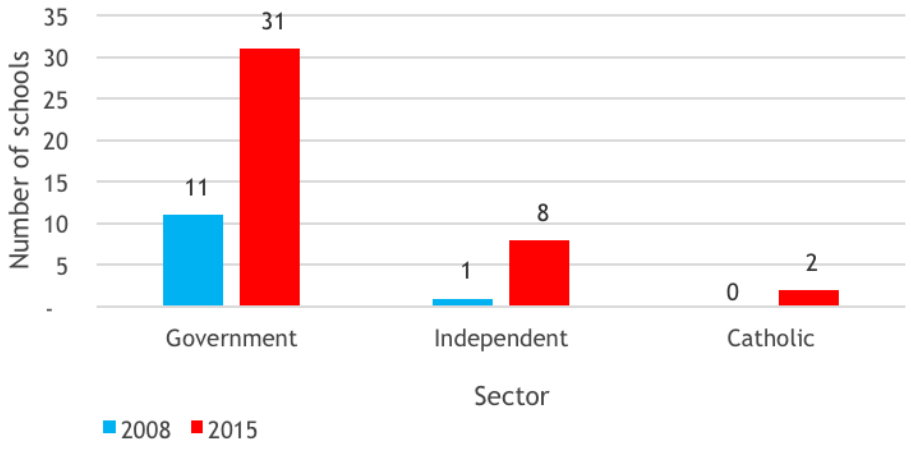


CHART 17: TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS (PRIMARY AND SECONDARY) STUDYING CHINESE IN 2008 AND 2015 BY SECTOR

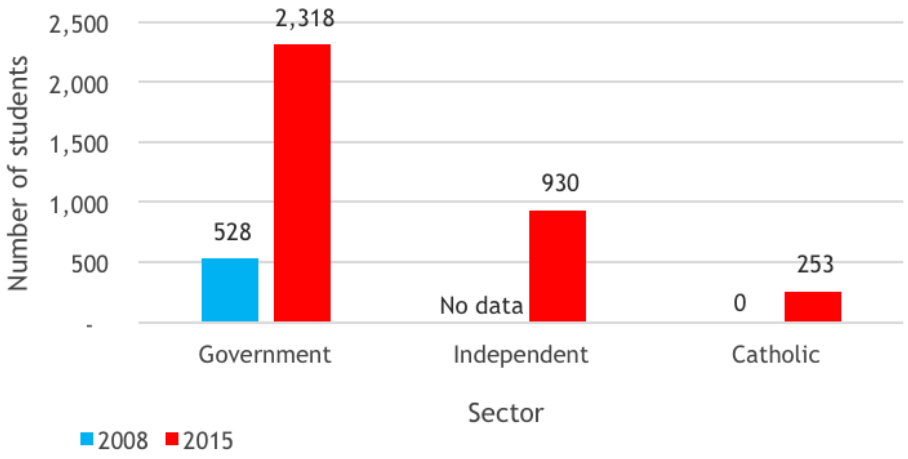
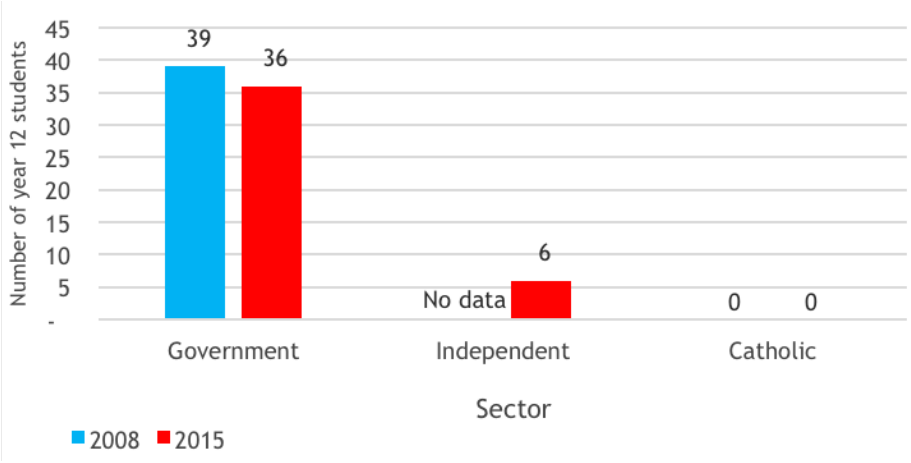


CHART 18: NUMBER OF YEAR 12 STUDENTS STUDYING CHINESE IN 2008 AND 2015 BY SECTOR



VICTORIA

TABLE 13: NUMBER OF SCHOOLS OFFERING CHINESE

	Primary	Secondary	Total
VIC-GOVT	180 (2014)	51 (2014)	**231 (2014)**
VIC-IND	57 (2013)	51 (2013)	**108 (2013)**
VIC-CATH	43 (2015)	16 (2015)	**59 (2015)**

TABLE 14: NUMBER OF STUDENTS STUDYING CHINESE

	Primary	Secondary (All)	Year 12	Total
VIC-GOVT	41,300 (2014)	10,761 (2014)	1,415 (2014)	**52,061 (2014)**
VIC-IND	7,991 (2013)	8,003 (2013)	677 (2013)	**15,994 (2013)**
VIC-CATH	8,293 (2015)	2,687 (2015)	70 (2015)	**10,980 (2015)**

CHART 19: NUMBER OF SCHOOLS OFFERING CHINESE IN 2008 AND 2015

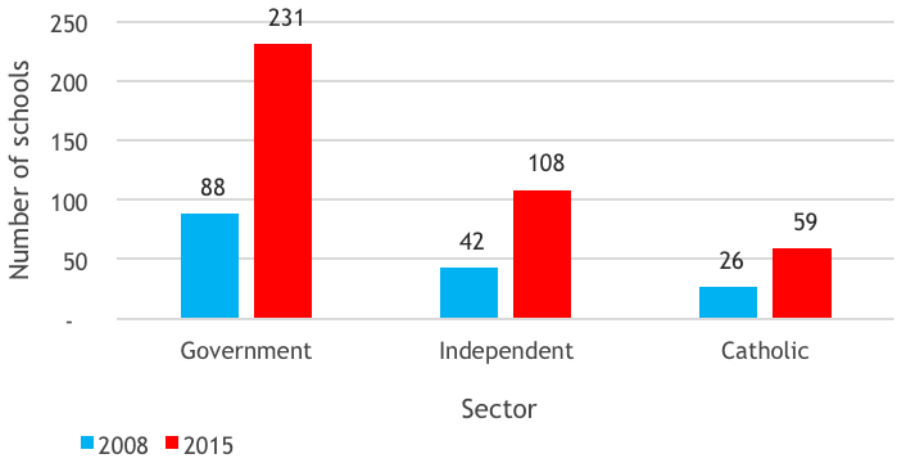


CHART 20: TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS (PRIMARY AND SECONDARY) STUDYING CHINESE IN 2008 AND 2015 BY SECTOR

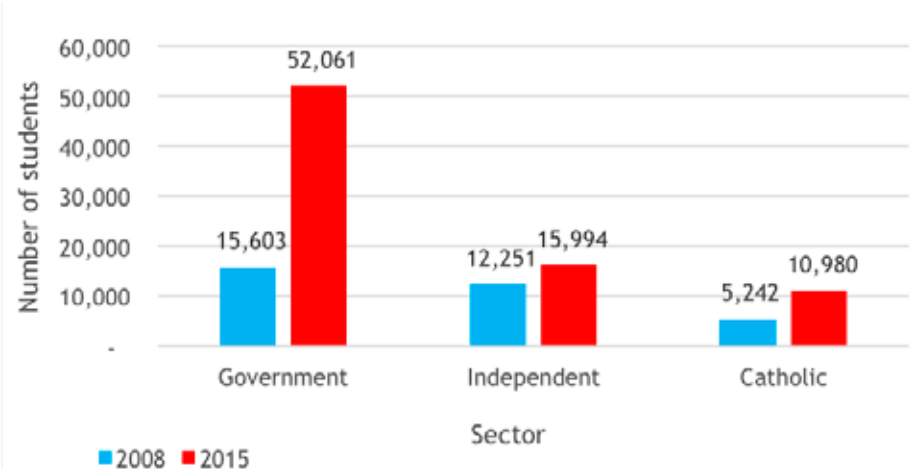
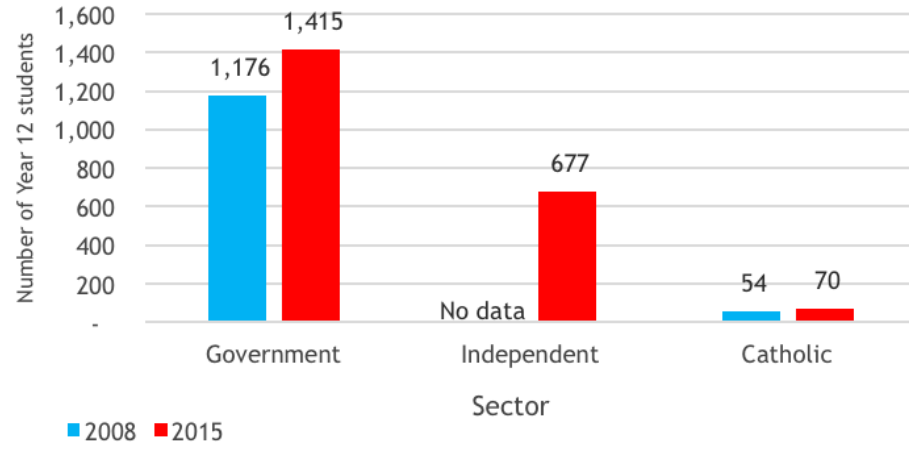


CHART 21: NUMBER OF YEAR 12 STUDENTS STUDYING CHINESE IN 2008 AND 2015 BY SECTOR



WESTERN AUSTRALIA

TABLE 15: NUMBER OF SCHOOLS OFFERING CHINESE

	Primary	Secondary	Total
WA-GOVT	19 (2014)	11 (2014)	**30 (2014)**
WA-IND	10 (2014)	10 (2014)	**20 (2014)**
WA-CATH	4 (2014)	4 (2014)	**8 (2014)**

TABLE 16: NUMBER OF STUDENTS STUDYING CHINESE

	Primary (K-7)	Secondary (8-12)	Year 12	Total
WA-GOVT	5,128 (2014)	1,574 (2014)	51 (2014)	**6,702 (2014)**
WA-IND	2,198 (2014)	368 (2014)	4 (2014)	**2,566 (2014)**
WA-CATH	583 (2014)	352 (2014)	5 (2014)	**935 (2014)**

CHART 22: NUMBER OF SCHOOLS OFFERING CHINESE IN 2008 AND 2015

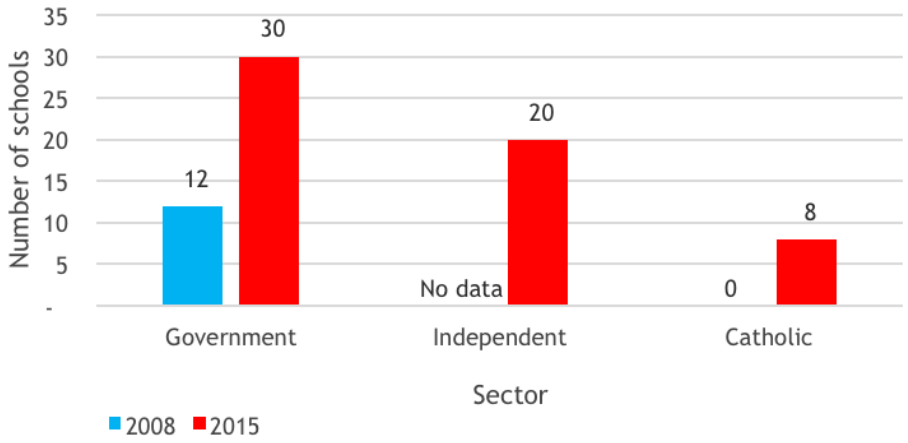


CHART 23: TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS (PRIMARY AND SECONDARY) STUDYING CHINESE IN 2008 AND 2015 BY SECTOR

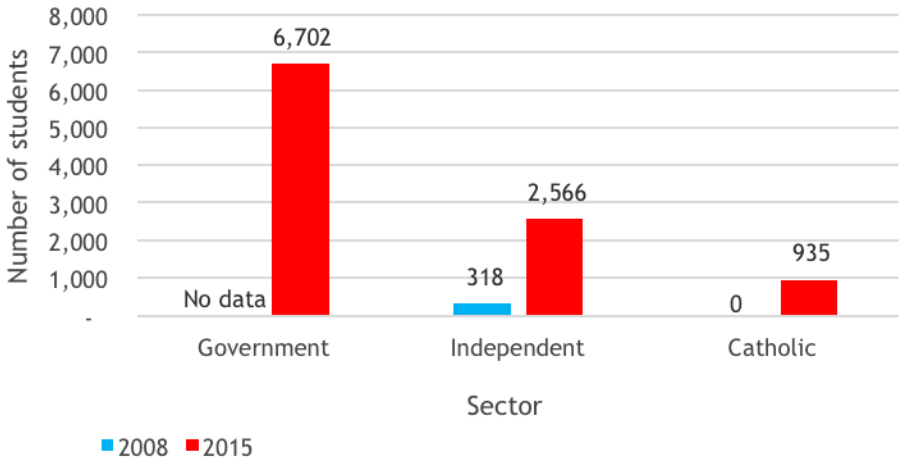
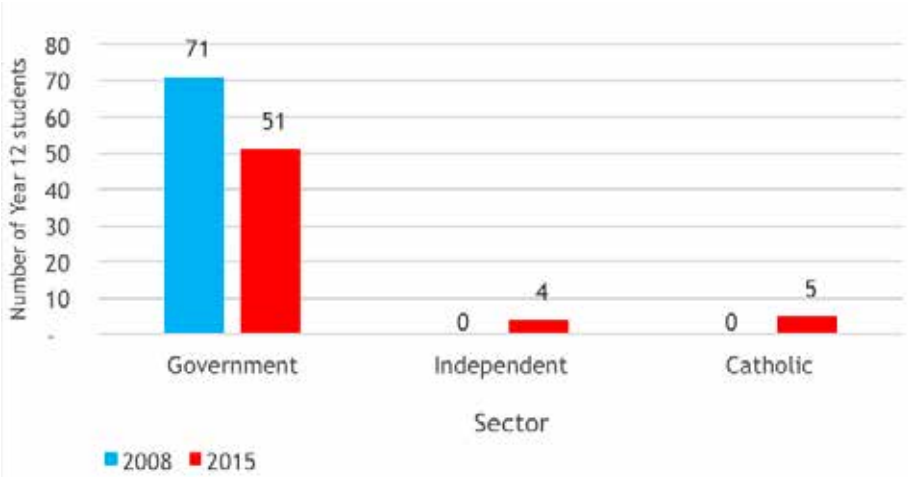


CHART 24: NUMBER OF YEAR 12 STUDENTS STUDYING CHINESE IN 2008 AND 2015 BY SECTOR



The 2014 Year 12 group in Western Australia was a half-cohort due to a change to a later school starting age for these (and subsequent) students.

Appendix B: Consultation List

Organisation / Government Body	Department / Division / Contact
Australian Capital Territory	
Board of Senior Secondary Studies	Education and Training Directorate
Department of Education ACT	Curriculum, Learning and Teaching Branch, Executive Officer
The Association of Independent Schools of the ACT	Curriculum and Professional Learning
Catholic Education – Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn	Teaching and Learning, Religious Education and Curriculum
New South Wales	
Board of Studies Teaching and Educational Standards NSW (BOSTES)	Inspector, Languages, Curriculum and Assessment Standards
NSW Department of Education	Executive Director, Learning and Leadership
Association of Independent Schools of NSW (AIS NSW)	Languages Consultant K-12
Catholic Education Commission NSW (CECNSW)	Assistant Director - Education Policy
Northern Territory	
Northern Territory Board of Studies (NTBOS)	http://www.education.nt.gov.au/teachers-educators/ntbos/ntcet-data
Northern Territory Department of Education	Languages Consultant, Curriculum, T-9
Darwin Languages Centre	Administration
Alice Springs Language Centre	Administration
Association of Independent Schools of the Northern Territory (AISNT)	Deputy Director
Catholic Education Northern Territory	Deputy Director, Teaching and Learning
Queensland	
Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority	https://www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/617.html
Queensland Department of Education and Training (DET)	Strategy and Performance
Independent Schools Queensland (ISQ)	Teaching and Learning
Brisbane Catholic Education	Learning and Teaching Services

South Australia	
South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE) Board	https://www.sace.sa.edu.au/web/sace-data
South Australia Department for Education and Child Development (DECD)	Languages and Australian Curriculum Policy
School of Languages (South Australia)	
Association of Independent Schools of South Australia (AISSA)	Administration
Catholic Education South Australia (CESA)	Languages consultant
School of Languages	Principal
Tasmania	
Tasmanian Assessment, Standards and Certification (TASC)	http://www.tqa.tas.gov.au/2349
The Department of Education Tasmania	Curriculum Services, Early Years and Schools
Independent Schools Tasmania (IST)	Finance and Administration
Tasmanian Catholic Education Office	Curriculum and Pedagogy
Victoria	
Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA)	Executive Director, Curriculum
Department of Education and Training	Performance and Evaluation Division
Independent Schools Victoria	General Manager, Teaching and Learning
Catholic Education Commission of Victoria (CECV)	Data and Strategy Analyst, Analysis, Policy and Research
Chinese Community Schools	Representatives
Western Australia	
School Curriculum and Standards Authority	http://www.scsa.wa.edu.au/internet/Publications/Reports/Statistical_Reports
Department of Education	Manager, System Performance
Association of Independent Schools of Western Australia (AISWA)	Curriculum Consultant - Languages
Catholic Education Western Australia (CEWA)	K-12 Languages Consultant, Teaching and Learning

Universities	
Adelaide University	Faculty of Arts
Australian Catholic University	Modern Languages Teacher Education
Canberra University	Faculty of Education, Science, Technology and Mathematics
Curtin University	School of Education
Flinders University	Faculty of Education
Griffith University	School of Education and Professional Studies
Macquarie University	Department of Education
Monash University	Faculty of Education
Queensland University of Technology	School of Cultural and Professional Learning, Faculty of Education
University of Melbourne	Melbourne Graduate School of Education
University of Queensland	School of Education
University of South Australia	Division of Education, Arts and Social Sciences
University of Sydney	Faculty of Education and Social Work
University of Technology Sydney	Student Administration Unit
Victoria University	College of Education
Language Teachers Associations	
Chinese Language Teachers Federation of Australia	President
Chinese Language Teachers Association of Western Australia (CLTA – WA)	President
Chinese Language Teachers Association of South Australia (CLTA –SA)	President
Chinese Language Teachers Association of Victoria (CLTA – Vic)	President
Chinese Language Teachers Association of New South Wales (CLTA – NSW)	President
Chinese Language Teachers Association of the ACT (CLTA – ACT)	President
Chinese Language Teachers Association of Queensland (CLTA –Qld)	President
Australian Federation of Modern Language Teachers Associations	President

Modern Language Teachers Association of Victoria	President
Japanese Teachers Centre	Director
Confucius Institutes	
Confucius Institute, University of Melbourne	Director
Confucius Institute, University of Western Australia	Director
Confucius Institute, University of Adelaide	Director
Confucius Institute, Department of Education, NSW	Director
Confucius Institute, Queensland University of Technology	Director
Schools offering Chinese bilingual programs	
Richmond West Primary School (Vic)	Principal and teachers
Abottsford Primary School (Vic)	Principal and teachers
Auburn High School (Vic)	Principal and teachers
Rouse Hill Primary School (NSW)	Principal and teachers
Oberthur Primary School (WA)	Principal and teachers
Varsity High School (Qld)	Principal and teachers
Other Relevant Experts	
Australian Curriculum for Chinese writers	Andrew Scrimgeour, Marnie Foster, Weifeng Mao
Chief Examiner and Chief Setter for Year 12 Chinese in Victoria (12 years)	James Wu
Language Policy Expert	Dr Yvette Slaughter
Language Policy Expert	Professor Joseph Lo Bianco
China in the World Centre, ANU	Director, Professor Ben Penny
Coral Bell School of Asia & the Pacific, ANU	Director, Professor Michael Wesley
Centre for contemporary Chinese Studies, University of Melbourne	Director, Professor Christine Wong
Chinese Language and Literature Academic and former Head of Department, Macquarie University	Emeritus Professor Daniel Kane
Business community representative, co-author Australia in the Asian Century	John Denton
Language Testing Research Centre, University of Melbourne	Director, Dr Ute Knoch

Appendix C: The Teaching of Chinese in Victoria Schools

DET Initiatives

THE TEACHING OF CHINESE IN VICTORIAN SCHOOLS: DET INITIATIVES

September 2015

Policy Context

Languages education is one of the eight learning areas that all Victorian schools are required by legislation to provide in order to meet the Education and Training Reform Act (2006) minimum standards.

Victorian government and non-government schools are required under legislation and as a condition of their registration with the Victorian Registration and Qualification Authority (VRQA) to provide a curriculum that substantially addresses the eight learning areas namely, The Arts, English, Health and Physical Education (including Sport), Languages, Mathematics, Science, Studies of Society and Environment and Technology.

The Victorian government values and supports the teaching of a diversity of languages. Over 20 languages, including Chinese, are taught in Victorian mainstream government schools.

Chinese in Government Schools in 2014

- In 2014, Chinese was the fourth most studied language in Victorian government schools
- 52,061 students studied Chinese in government primary schools, secondary colleges and the Victorian School of Languages
- Chinese was offered at 21 VSL centres (including through distance education) in both regional and metropolitan areas
- Chinese was studied by 415 students at VCE level

- Chinese was taught by 221 teachers in 170 primary schools, 12 primary/secondary schools and 41 secondary schools as well as VSL

- Enrolments in Chinese in government schools remain relatively strong with a significant increase in primary enrolments between 2013 and 2014, as shown in the table below.

Enrolment trends in Chinese, 2008–2014

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Primary schools	10,113	12,333	14,292	16,752	19,368	29,760	39,994
VSL primary	1,300	1,230	1,314	1,337	1,325	1,345	1,306
Secondary schools	4,121	4,726	5,424	6,245	7,251	8,189	9,526
VSL secondary	1,497	1,441	1,430	1,398	1,364	1,259	1,235
TOTAL	**17,031**	**19,730**	**22,460**	**25,732**	**29,308**	**40,553**	**52,061**

The Department of Education and Training (DET) provides the following support for the learning and teaching of Chinese

Chinese Language Adviser

A Chinese Language Adviser, co-funded by DET and Hanban, is employed to provide professional development and linguistic support to schools and teachers of Chinese.

Chinese Community Languages Schools

DET provides annual per capital funding of $190 per student to approximately 180 Community Languages Schools to support out-of-school hours language tuition to some 36,000 primary and secondary school students in 45 languages. In 2014, DET funded 27 Chinese Community Language Schools which provided Prep – Year 12 Chinese language programs to 12,392 students.

DET also provides annual funding support to enable community languages school teachers and administrators to participate in accredited teacher training programs and professional development activities.

Chinese Bilingual Programs

DET's Designated Bilingual Program provides schools with additional funding to support the delivery of bilingual programs providing students with access to study part of the core curriculum in and through the target language. Chinese bilingual programs are offered at Abbotsford Primary School and Richmond West Primary School.

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) Courses

CLIL programs combine teaching content from a curriculum area with explicit teaching of the target language. There is a focus on the vocabulary and structures required for the additional curriculum area. Content may include all or part of one or more curriculum areas. DET funds The University of Melbourne to deliver CLIL courses in collaboration with the Bastow Institute of Educational Leadership. CLIL courses are available every year and also provide teachers with six CRT days to attend workshops and study leave days to complete assessment tasks. A total of 16 teachers of Chinese have been supported to undertake a CLIL course.

CLIL teaching units that have been developed by participants who complete the course are published on DET's FUSE website for teachers to access. DET also funds a CLIL Teacher Network that provides professional learning opportunities such as webinars and presentations from CLIL experts from around the world.

Languages Teaching Scholarships

$6 million was allocated over three years for Languages Teaching Scholarships to enable currently employed teachers and undergraduate students who have proficiency in a language to become qualified languages teachers. A total of 35 graduates and currently employed teachers have been supported to become qualified teachers of Chinese.

Annual In-country Language Refresher Course for Teachers of Chinese

The annual In-country Language Refresher Course for Teachers of Chinese is jointly funded by DET and Hanban to provide currently employed teachers of Chinese to undertake a three week in-country intensive language maintenance course at the University of Beijing. In 2015, 14 teachers of Chinese participated in the study tour.

The in-country course provides teachers with an opportunity to upgrade their knowledge of Chinese language through in-country immersion, strengthen their pedagogy and methodology for teaching Chinese as a foreign language, collect teaching resources and share teaching methods with other teachers of Chinese.

International Student Summer Camp – Beijing

DET supported the participation of 20 students from the South Eastern Region who are studying Chinese and two teachers of Chinese in the International Student Summer Camp - Beijing from July 14 to 23 2015. The camp organised and funded by the Beijing Municipal Education Commission. DET provided funding to subsidise participants' airfares and registration fees. Given the success of the initiative, planning is underway for another regional group of students to attend in 2016.

Languages Online

DET provides interactive online learning resources for Chinese teachers, including 36 topic based modules in Chinese (http://www.education.vic.gov.au/languagesonline/chinese/chinese.htm).

Online Chinese Course for Year 7 and 8 Students

The Victorian School of Languages has developed an innovative online Chinese language course for Years 7 and 8 students which is available to all secondary schools which teach Chinese.

Chinese Language Teachers Association of Victoria (CLTAV)

DET provides the CLTAV with an annual grant to support teacher professional learning programs including language immersion activities, Chinese teacher networks, curriculum and resource development and language immersion activities for students. The CLTAV provides ongoing support to teachers to develop contemporary pedagogies for Chinese language teaching and learning and assessment activities.

Confucius Classrooms

Confucius Classrooms are funded by Hanban to stimulate and support innovative teaching and learning of Chinese language and culture. Twelve Victorian schools (8 government, 3 independent, 1 Catholic) have established Confucius Classrooms to support the teaching of Chinese.

Exploratoriums

An Exploratorium is a dedicated learning space using screen-based technology to provide a range of cultural, historical and linguistic information about China. Nine government schools have received Chinese Exploratoriums jointly funded by Hanban and DET to enrich their Chinese language programs.

Victorian-Chinese Sister Schools

At the end of 2014, there were a total of 140 Sister School relationships between Victorian and Chinese schools, an intertia from 98 in 2012.

Assistants to Teachers of Chinese Program (ATCP)

The ATCP places Chinese undergraduates as language assistants in Victorian government and non-government schools for a school year. The program began in 2008 with six schools and assistants, and in 2015, 29 Chinese language assistants have been placed in Victorian schools to support the delivery of Chinese programs.

Hanban recruits graduates from Chinese universities to participate in the program and pays the assistants a monthly stipend. Host schools are responsible for supporting the students including providing home-stay accommodation and monitoring the ongoing welfare and wellbeing of the assistants. The DET provides an induction program and ongoing professional learning opportunities to support the assistants during their placement. The Chinese Language Adviser provides support and mentoring to ensure that the assistants transition easily into their school settings.

Victorian Young Leaders to China Program (VYLCP)

The VYLCP is an immersion program launched by the Victorian government to encourage Year 9 students to stay engaged in learning. Over the five year period from 2014 to 2018, a total of 1,500 Year 9 students will travel to China for six weeks for language, educational, cultural and leadership skills advancement.

To date, a total of 269 students have participated in the program including 121 in 2015.

Languages in the early years

Victoria promotes the teaching of all Languages in the early years. Resources including fact sheets, posters and links to research about learning languages are available from DET Languages webpage at: http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/curriculum/Pages/languagepromotion.aspx

My Passport to Languages

My Passport to Languages (or Passports) has been developed as a resource for language teachers and as a means of engaging Prep to Year 3 students and their families in languages education.

Passports are currently available for free to Victorian Government schools and are available in Chinese, French, German, Greek, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese and Spanish, which are eight of the most widely taught languages in Victorian government schools.

Language Teacher Register

The Language Teacher Register assists schools to find qualified language teachers to fill vacant language teaching positions in government schools.

The register is open to graduating, graduate and currently employed language teachers who are seeking a language teaching position in a government primary or secondary school. Eligible language teachers can register using the 'SurveyMonkey' online form.

Victorian government school principals may contact the Languages Unit at the Department of Education and Training if they are seeking to employ a language teacher.

When a relevant teaching position becomes available, a registrant will be sent the details of this position via email. The onus is then on the registrant to contact the school and formally apply for the position.

There are currently seven teachers of Chinese language on the register.

Team China Bendigo

Collaboration between 24 government schools in Bendigo under the leadership of Bendigo Senior Secondary College have created opportunities for sharing Chinese language teaching and learning resources, including staffing and teaching arrangements to support the increase in the teaching of Chinese in the area. The partnership now supports mentoring, coaching and targeted professional development for the Chinese teachers. School partnerships through the Confucius Classroom Program and Team China Bendigo have underpinned improvements in the teaching of Chinese in Bendigo government schools.

Appendix D: Monash University Entry Courses

This list is provided to show the complexity of levels of language proficiency of students entering undergraduate Chinese language studies. All universities offer some of these courses; this is one of the most comprehensive set of offerings in the country, catering to the wide variation in the capacity and needs of local and international students.

1. Introductory Chinese: for total beginners.

2. Introductory Chinese for Background Speakers: for beginners who can speak a Chinese language other than Mandarin.

3. Intermediate Chinese: for students who have completed Year 12 second language.

4. Proficient Chinese: for students who have completed Year 12 second language Advanced or VCE L1 stream.

5. Advanced Chinese 1 and 2: for students who have completed Year 12 VCE L1 stream.

6. Advanced Chinese 3 and above: generally for students who have completed their education in a Chinese-speaking area for up to nine years.

Appendix E: Letter from Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commissioner

Victorian Equal Opportunity
& Human Rights Commission

Level 3, 204 Lygon Street
Carlton, VIC 3053

Telephone 1300 891 848
Fax 1300 891 858
TTY 1300 289 621
Interpreters: 1300 152 494
Email: information@veohrc.vic.gov.au

humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au

29 June 2015

Dr David Howes
Executive Director, Curriculum
Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority
Level 1, 2 Lonsdale Street
Melbourne VIC 3000

Dear Dr Howes

Application of eligibility criteria to enrolments in VCE language courses

Thank you for your letter seeking the formal advice of the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human rights Commission regarding the application of eligibility criteria by VCAA to enrolments in VCE language courses and Chinese language courses in particular.

You have asked whether, under current Victorian laws and regulations, VCAA could request information from students about languages spoken at home and adapt eligibility requirements for language course levels to consider this information. You have outlined that this query arises from concerns that students without a Chinese language background are discouraged from studying Chinese because they will not be able to compete on an equal level with students with a greater language background.

The Commission is unable to provide legal advice. However, we have considered your query in light of VCAA's obligations under the *Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)* and *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* ('Charter') and have outlined relevant issues and our views below prior to your meeting at the Commission on 1 July 2015. The Commission looks forward to discussing these issues further with you.

VCAA may also wish to seek legal advice in relation to these issues.

1. Summary

Our view is that a request for information from students about languages spoken at home and adapting eligibility requirements to consider this information may amount to indirect discrimination unless there is evidence to demonstrate it is reasonable.

2. Background: current eligibility requirements

We understand that three Chinese language course options are offered in VCE designed for students with varying levels of Chinese learning experience: Chinese Second Language ('CSL'), Chinese Second Language Advanced ('CSLA'), and Chinese First Language ('CFL'). VCAA's eligibility criteria restrict who can enrol in CSL and CSLA.

- CSL is designed for students who have studied the language for at least 200 hours prior to Unit 1. A student is not eligible for CSL if they have 12 months or more education in a school where Chinese is the medium of instruction, or three years or more residence in China, Taiwan, Hong Kong or Macau.

- CSLA is designed for students who have had more Chinese learning experience than those in CSL but less than CFL. A student is eligible for CSLA if they have had no more than seven years of education in a school where Chinese is the medium of instruction, or if they have attained a level of education in a school where Chinese is the medium of instruction not greater than the equivalent of Year 7.

- CFL is designed for students who have spent significant time as a resident and or have had significant educational experience where Chinese has been a major language of communication and medium of instruction. There is no eligibility criteria for CFL.

Students are informed of the criteria and must submit an application form in which VCAA requests specified personal, educational and residence history and supporting documentation. The student's Principal provides the application form to VCAA with a recommendation as to whether the student is eligible for enrolment in CSL or CSLA.

3. Equal Opportunity Act 2010

Unlawful discrimination under the *Equal Opportunity Act 2010* ('EOA') includes direct and indirect discrimination on the basis of a protected attribute. Race is a protected attribute. The definition of race relevantly includes descent or ancestry; nationality or national origin; and ethnicity or ethnic origin (see s 4).

Authority as a body that confers and issues registered qualifications (VCE and VCAL). Under s 36 of the EOA, a qualifying body must not discriminate against a person in the terms on which it confers, renews or extends an occupational qualification (s 36(1)(b)) or by subjecting the person to any other detriment (s 36(1)(e)). Discrimination will be unlawful unless an exception or exemption applies.

3.1. Direct discrimination

Direct discrimination occurs if a person treats, or proposes to treat, a person with an attribute unfavourably because of that attribute (s 8).

The application of eligibility requirements for language course levels based on languages spoken at home may require a student who has lived in a home where Chinese language is spoken to undertake a CSLA or.CFL course instead of a CSL course. Requiring a student to undertake a more advanced course instead of a CSL course would arguably amount to unfavourable treatment. Conversely, requiring a student who comes from a background where Chinese is not spoken

at home to compete 'equally' against a student who does, may also amount to unfavourable treatment.

However to establish direct discrimination, there must be a causal connection between the treatment complained of and the protected attribute. The application of eligibility requirements based on languages spoken at home so that a student with the attribute of Chinese race was required to undertake CSLA or CFL, would be unlikely to amount to direct discrimination because the reason for any unfavourable treatment would not be because of race but because of the extent to which a student had exposure to Chinese language outside of formal education.[1]

3.2. Indirect discrimination

Indirect discrimination occurs when an unreasonable requirement, condition or practice - which may appear to treat people equally - has the effect of disadvantaging, or potentially disadvantaging a group of people with a particular protected attribute (s 9).

The application of eligibility requirements for language course levels based on languages spoken at home, while applying to all students, may have the effect of disadvantaging students of Chinese descent, heritage, nationality or national origin. Requiring a student to undertake a CSLA or CFL course instead of a CSL course would arguably amount to a disadvantage because those courses are more advanced and therefore it would be more difficult to obtain higher scores in any assessment tasks in CSL.

Accordingly, indirect discrimination may occur unless the eligibility requirement is reasonable.

VCAA, as the person who imposes, or proposes to impose, the requirement has the burden of proving the requirement is reasonable (s 9(2)). Whether a requirement is reasonable depends on all the

[1] See for example *VN on behalf of VO v Office of the Board of Studies NSW* [2006] NSWADT 106 available at http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/cases/nsw/NSWADT/2006/106.html. The New South Wales Anti-Discrimination Tribunal dismissed the applicant's complaint on behalf of her son that the Board's eligibility criteria for Chinese language study discriminated against her son on the ground of race in breach of the *Anti-Discrimination Act* 1977 (NSW). See especially discussion at [42], [54] and [66].

relevant circumstances of the case (s 9(3)), including the nature and extent of the disadvantage resulting from the imposition of the requirement (s 9(3)(a)) and whether the disadvantage is proportionate to the result sought (s 9(3)(b)).

To the extent requiring a student to undertake a CSLA or CFL course instead of a CSL course may amount to a disadvantage, VCAA should consider ways to mitigate the nature and extent of the disadvantage (for example by a process to seek an exception where a student can establish a reason why language competency is below that assumed by the criteria).

In assessing whether the disadvantage is proportionate to the result sought, VCAA should be able to articulate the result sought from imposing a requirement that takes languages spoken at home into account (the policy justification, for example to improve educational outcomes for all students). [2]

VCAA should also be able to demonstrate that the requirement is necessary to achieve such a result, having considered other potential means available to achieve the purpose (for example by ascertaining language knowledge/competency through testing).

3.3. Exceptions

The EOA provides certain exceptions to discrimination.

Under s 88 of the EOA, a person 'may establish special services, benefits or facilities that meet the special needs of people with a particular attribute and may limit eligibility for such services to people with the particular attribute.' This exception complements the promotion of 'special measures' in s 12 of the EOA, which provides that a special measure for the purpose of promoting or realising

[2] See for example *VN on behalf of VO v Office of the Board of Studies NSW* [2006] NSWADT 106 available at: http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/cases/nsw/NSWADT/2006/106.html. In that case, the New South Wales Anti-Discrimination Tribunal found that 'the real reason the Board treated students differently in having to meet eligibility for a Continuers course is that some languages are offered on that basis and others are not, for genuinely held educational reasons' [54]. The Tribunal commented (at [56]) that this reason for imposing the requirements 'strongly suggests that, had there been an inquiry into indirect discrimination, the Board's requirement that eligibility criteria be met would have been found to be reasonable in the circumstances.'

substantive equality for members of a group with a particular attribute is not discrimination.

We do not think that the provision of different Chinese language course options or eligibility criteria for different course options amounts to a special measure or a special benefit to meet the needs of people with a particular attribute. We do not consider that any other exceptions in the EOA would apply in the context of the application of eligibility criteria by VCAA to enrolments in VCE language courses and Chinese language courses in particular.

3.4. Discriminatory requests for information

The EOA makes it unlawful to request information for a discriminatory purpose (s 107). If VCAA were to request information from students about languages spoken at home, it must be able to demonstrate that a request for information about languages spoken at home is reasonably required for a purpose that does not involve prohibited discrimination (s 108).

A request for information would be acceptable if you can establish that criteria are reasonable and therefore not indirect discrimination as per above.

4. Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006

As VCAA is a public authority under the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 ('Charter') (s 4), it.is unlawful for VCAA to act in a way that is incompatible with a human righter, in making a decision, to fail to give proper consideration to a relevant human right.

Relevant human rights in these circumstances are the right of every person to the equal protection of the law without discrimination (s 8(3)) and the right not to have his or her privacy, family or home unlawfully or arbitrarily interfered with (s 13(a)).

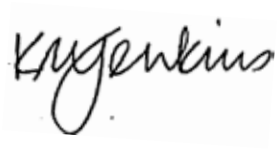
'Discrimination' in s 8(3) of the Charter means discrimination within the meaning of the EOA on the basis of an attribute set out in that act. If a criterion based on a student's family and experience, such as

the language used in the home or by family members, amounted to indirect discrimination, it would also breach s 8(3) of the Charter.

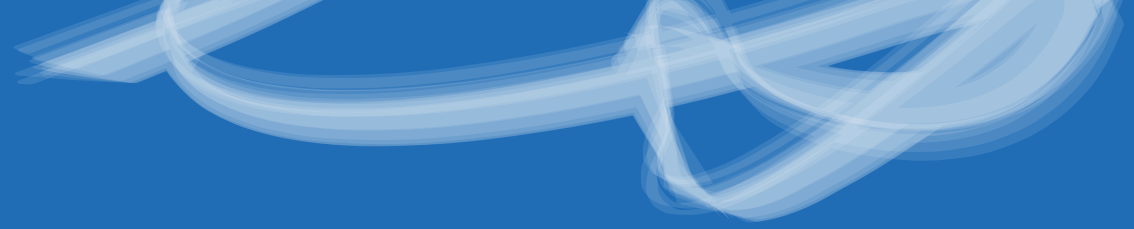
The privacy right in s 13(a) of the Charter protects individuals from a wide range of interferences with their private life, including inerference with information privacy. A request for and the collection of personal information that cannot be demonstrated as necessary for a reasonable purpose may also amount to an arbitrary interference with a student's privacy inconsistent with the right in s 13(a). Further, under s 8(2) of the Charter, every person has the right to enjoy his or her human rights without discrimination.

We hope that this summary of issues and our views on the issues raised provides some assistance.

Yours sincerely



Kate Jenkins
Commissioner



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