Identifying current staff skills

This resource guide provides a general overview of the current range of courses and training available to support school communities in the teaching of languages.

Community language revival is a long-term and complex process. It is important that all participants are provided with opportunities to develop their knowledge, understanding of, and skills in, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages. This development is integral to a long-term plan for community language revival, therefore project planning needs to be undertaken before any training activities.

The language and associated cultural knowledge belongs to the respective groups and the authenticity and use of such knowledge should be negotiated with communities, particularly Elders and other custodians, who should be included in a school's Language Reference Group.

Ideally, as part of a long-term planning process, the Language Reference Group will undertake a skills audit of the community to ascertain the needs and strengths of individuals. The skill needs of respective groups will vary according to their role/s in the school community, and will set the direction/s for school communities in terms of training, skilling and other courses.

Once identified, the "skill gaps" need to be filled by bringing outside experts into the community; their role may be two-fold, providing:

- expertise and work with community members
- training to upskill school-community members.

Some technical aspects of language revival, e.g. linguistic analysis, may require external knowledge not present within the community and which there is no real capacity to develop within the community. Wherever possible, opportunity should be taken to enhance the knowledge and skills of school community members.

A number of generic training programs or workshops related to languages are available to school communities, however, it is worth considering tailoring training to community needs and shaping the training to suit the language revival program.

Community and teacher skills development

In community language revival, the primary role of the school is to support community members in their language journey and facilitate partnerships for the teaching/learning of languages. Where appropriate, representative school staff could be included in community training activities to ensure they have an understanding of the knowledge and skills required for language revival in the community.

Areas of skill development to consider for community members and school staff

Skill	Community	Staff
Project management	Language revival is a long-term process and requires a well-developed plan; consequently community members may need skilling in project management. Government agencies may conduct project management training as part of their funding programs or as part of a community development process. Non-government agencies or community-based groups may also conduct training in project management and/or community development. Specific skills in this area include: • project management • funding submission • budgeting • report writing • action planning.	

Language	The language landscape of Queensland communities has changed dramatically and the language knowledge in communities may no longer be strong. Community members may require training to rebuild lost language skills. Courses in language may be available through TAFE or other institutions such as Batchelor, however, it may be most appropriate to conduct localised training sessions with input both from community members who retain language knowledge and from external linguistic experts.
	Specific language skills include:
	• speaking the sounds of the language
	• writing conventions to represent the sounds of the language
	• basic grammar rules
	• everyday vocabulary.
		The teaching of language should be negotiated with community; teachers will need certain skills to enhance their support for community language teachers. In addition to a basic understanding of community language revival and associated processes, teachers also need to have some linguistic knowledge to understand language terminology and concepts.
		Specific language skills include:
		• introductory linguistics — basic terminology and concepts
		• basic understanding of the local/regional language:
		  – sounds of the language
		  – how these sounds are written
		  – basic grammar rules
		  – everyday vocabulary.

Research	In many school communities, there will be a need to reconstruct the language using archival records and/or historical sources. Community members may require training in how to conduct and record research. Specific skills in this area include: • identifying historical sources • researching primary source materials • analysing language materials from a range of sources • documenting and archiving language materials.	

Skill	Community	Staff
Technical	The use of technology in language revival has proved to be a successful practice and enables community members to be involved at all stages of language revival and associated activities. Training in technical skills may be available through local libraries, TAFE, schools or community organisations. In addition, particular language software may have training available through the provider or via an on-line course. Specific skills in this area include: • basic computing skills, e.g. data entry • recording language — audio and/or video • use of language software programs, e.g. Miromaa (various licences), Lexique Pro (freeware).	Teaching staff involved in school community language activities may require skills in information technologies that support language revival. Some schools may have access to IT specialist support while others may have to rely on available staff members who have an interest or expertise in information technologies. Specific skills in this area include: • basic computing skills, e.g. data entry • recording language – audio and/or video • use of language software programs, e.g. Miromaa (various licences), Lexique Pro (freeware).
Production and development	Once language materials are collected and analysed, school communities can develop language resources to form the basis for teaching/learning a language. Most communities aim to develop a dictionary or similar lexicon, e.g. wordlists, as a means of documenting the language in an accessible format. Specific skills in this area include: • development of language materials/resources • production of dictionaries or similar products • use of computer software programs to produce digital stories/resources.	Teaching staff may be called upon to support community members to develop language resources and other support materials. Specific skills in this area include: • development of language materials/resources • production of dictionaries or similar products • use of computer software programs to produce digital stories/resources.

Language courses and training

There are several organisations that may offer language-related training and other support, including Indigenous Language Centres, Government agencies, community organisations, public libraries, Indigenous Knowledge Centres, TAFEs, schools, registered training organisations and private providers.

In addition to formal training programs, there may be scope to negotiate localised training that meets the needs of the school community.

For example, NSW TAFE offers Certificate level courses (Certificate I, II and III) in Aboriginal Languages; there may be potential for these courses to be offered through Queensland Institutes of TAFE, if suitable teaching staff are available and student demand is sufficient.

Indigenous language centres

There are several language centres or community organisations that may be able to facilitate language-related training. Please see the companion resource guide: *Language centres and community organisations.*

University language courses

Tertiary language and linguistic courses include both undergraduate and postgraduate courses.

Queensland

- University of Queensland (UQ) School of Languages and Comparative Cultural Studies — the School of Languages and Comparative Cultural Studies (SLCCS) specialises in teaching and research in major world languages and cultures: www.slccs.uq.edu.au/index.html?page=17998&pid=19624

- University of Southern Queensland (USQ) Toowoomba — offers postgraduate programs in Applied Linguistics: www.usq.edu.au/handbook/2011/edu/edu.html

Interstate

- Australian National University (ANU) Linguistics, Languages and Culture — ANU has an international reputation in the fields of linguistics, languages and cultures, supporting researchers who work on a broad range of related topics: http://linguistics.anu.edu.au/

- Australian Centre for Indigenous Knowledges and Education (ACIKE) — a joint initiative between Charles Darwin University (CDU) and Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education (BIITE): www.acike.edu.au. ACIKE provides Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with opportunities to develop skills and knowledge within an Indigenous framework. The Bachelor of Indigenous Languages and Linguistics prepares students for professional practice, further study or research in the fields of language and linguistics, and in Indigenous language planning and policy at local and national levels: http://stapps.cdu.edu.au/pls/apex/f?p=100:31:1191502109946896::::P31_SEARCH_COURSE:BILL.

- Koori Centre, University of Sydney — operates several postgraduate courses in Indigenous Languages Education: http://sydney.edu.au/koori/studying/postgrad.shtml

- Macquarie University Phonetics and Phonology of Australian Aboriginal Languages — teaching materials to support the subject/course work: http://clas.mq.edu.au/phonetics/phonology/aboriginal/index.html

- University of New England (UNE) Armidale — offers a range of undergraduate and postgraduate courses: www.une.edu.au/bcss/linguistics/index.php

- University of Sydney Linguistics Department — provides an overview of available linguistics courses as well as resources, blogs, etc.: www.sydney.edu.au/arts/linguistics/

TAFE language courses

There is a limited range of language-specific courses at TAFE in Queensland, however, there may be potential to offer interstate courses or language-specific units of work. Some language courses were developed in the 1990s and may no longer be taught in Queensland TAFE institutions; schools may like to approach local/regional TAFEs with a view to updating and reinstating these courses.

These options will be dependent on resourcing, particularly the availability of suitable, appropriately qualified teaching staff, as well as the level of community interest and demand for places.

Queensland

TAFE Queensland offers both a Certificate III and a Certificate IV in Education Support (CHC30808 and CHC41708 respectively) for the training of Teacher Aides — there may be provision to include language and culture studies within existing programs. For example, within the Certificate IV course, there is an elective CHCEDS403A: "Promote and implement Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander language and culture programs".

In 1996, the Tropical North Queensland Institute of TAFE, Cairns, developed a range of courses aimed at community language workers: Certificate III in Indigenous Language Studies, Certificate IV in Indigenous Language Studies, and Diploma of Indigenous Australian Language Studies. These courses are no longer offered but there is potential for the course to be reinstated and offered through another institution if there is sufficient course interest and an available teacher.

New South Wales

NSW TAFE offers Certificate level courses (Certificate I, II and III) in Aboriginal Languages at various colleges, e.g. Dubbo, Tamworth. Such courses may be able to be offered through Queensland Institutes of TAFE. Course offerings generally depend on the availability of suitable teaching staff and the level of student demand/interest.

Victoria

TAFE Victoria offers a Certificate III and IV in Australian Language and Cultural Heritage at Gippsland TAFE; such courses may be able to be offered through Queensland Institutes of TAFE, subject to availability of suitable teaching staff and sufficient student demand/interest.

Other training support

Community organisations or groups working in culture and/or language related areas may provide community training — school communities are encouraged to identify such groups.

- **Arwarbukarl Cultural Resource Association Inc.** — ACRA has developed the Miromaa software program, which is a specialist database for the collection, analysis and documentation of languages. ACRA provides on-line and workshop training for Miromaa. Further details: www.miromaa.org.au/

- **Muurrbay Aboriginal Language and Culture Co-operative**, Nambucca Heads — Muurrbay serves as a regional language centre for Northern NSW. It hosts community training sessions on regional NSW languages, and the Summer Language School at University of Sydney (Gamilaraay, Wiradjuri, Bundjalung and Gumbaynggirr): www.muurrbay.org.au/

- **Our Languages** — this website aims to become a place where people from all around Australia will be able to share and to come together in all manner of ways to support the 250 plus Aboriginal Languages that exist in this country. The website provides details on training and other programs: www.ourlanguages.net.au

- **Resource Network for Linguistic Diversity (RNLD)** — offers training to Indigenous communities and organisations through the Documenting and Revitalising Indigenous Languages (DRIL) Program. RNLD also can tailor training to suit community needs, especially in the area of linguistic software. Further details: www.rnld.org/RNLD_training#training

- **State Library of Queensland** —provides community training that can be used for community language revival activities, in collaboration with public libraries and Indigenous Knowledge Centres. Contact local library or visit website for further details (see "Community Workshops": www.slq.qld.gov.au/resources/atsi/languages/slq

- **Yuwaalaraay Language Program** (Walgett) — provides information, including on-line/digital materials, relating to Gamilaraay, Yuwaalaraay and Yuwaalayaay languages. In addition, the website highlights training courses related to these languages: www.yuwaalaraay.org

Community training and skills development can assist school communities in the recording, documentation and preservation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages; furthermore these processes empower community to manage the teaching and learning of languages.

More information

Please email langtrial@qsa.qld.edu.au, phone (07) 3864 0310 or visit the QSA website <www.qsa.qld.edu.au> and search for "Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages".