

Response of the Languages and Cultures Network for Australian Universities (LCNAU) to the Consultation Paper on the reallocation of Commonwealth supported places for enabling, sub-bachelor and postgraduate courses

Given the particular interest of the Languages and Cultures Network for Australian Universities (LCNAU) in the maintenance and development of the Diploma in Languages, we shall restrict our response to the Consultation Paper to this particular sub-bachelor award.

Firstly, and most importantly, we warmly welcome the recognition within this paper (p. 12) that the previous consultation process “potentially exclude[d] cognate diplomas, such as the Diploma of Languages” and the affirmation that these diplomas will be reinstated within the category of awards eligible for CSP funding.

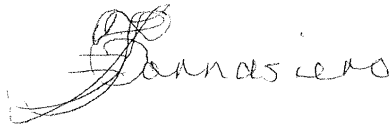
Whilst considering tertiary institutions best placed to determine the timing and extent of allocating or re-allocating places, it is imperative that regularity and predictability be key concerns in this process, especially when it comes to languages provision. Sudden reductions in funding affect languages provision dramatically. Two closures of languages options for students in regional areas have occurred in 2018 alone - partial closure at the University of the Sunshine Coast and complete closure at the University of Southern Queensland. Two major providers of languages in metropolitan areas - ANU and RMIT - currently no longer have access to the Diploma of Languages, as a result of the negative outcomes announced in 2017 following the previous consultation, and it is hoped that their previous quota can be reallocated without obstacle or excessive delay.

However, although welcoming the restoration of the concurrent Diploma of Languages model, we are concerned by the accompanying statement that these courses must “either have full articulation to bachelor-level study or be open only to students that are concurrently enrolled in a bachelor degree program at the same institution.” Whilst the common version of the Diploma of Languages corresponds to the concurrent enrolment model, and is taken by students in the same institution as their bachelor award, the Diploma also has had a stand-alone model which allows it to meet requirements that are listed elsewhere in the paper as most desirable. It is an unfortunate fact that

many institutions teach only a limited range of languages, and that some teach none at all, especially in regional areas. A stand-alone diploma not only allows students to enrol in one institution for their main degree and in another for their language of choice, it also allows students who already hold a bachelor award to study languages subsequently if their professional situation requires this - for example, a teacher of Japanese being required by their employer to add Mandarin to their qualifications, a regional undergraduate student with no access to a language in their home institution needing a language for study abroad or for a specialised degree, or a postgraduate student being required to add a language for the purpose of their research. In such scenarios the stand-alone diploma offers optimal preparation for the mastery of a language for a range of professional purposes, while providing explicit recognition for the study of a major sequence of language study. It also offers access to the advantages of the concurrent model for those students who have already taken out a bachelor award. In addition, the Diploma meets many of those standards flagged throughout the paper: high quality, strong outcomes, while meeting professional needs and improving regional access.

Overall, however, while also making a case for the stand-alone model, we are delighted that the concerns expressed during the previous consultation process have been heard and that the Diploma of Languages will once again be recognised for its valuable contribution to student learning.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jean Fornasiero', with a stylized flourish extending from the end of the name.

Jean Fornasiero
President, LCNAU

15 February 2019