



Submission cover sheet

Inquiry into E-PET-077-25: Access to 11-12 ATAR language courses in 2026

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Submitter: Senthil Shanmugam & Vaishnavi Senthil Kumar

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Submission to the Standing Committee

Inquiry into E-Petition 077-25: Access to 11–12 ATAR Language Courses in 2026

We are writing to express our strong support for E-Petition 077-25 and to explain why continued access to Year 11–12 ATAR language courses, particularly Tamil, is deeply important to our family and to the broader ACT community.

Tamil is one of the oldest living languages in the world, with an extraordinary literary and cultural heritage. One of its most revered works is the Thirukkural, written by the philosopher Thiruvalluvar over two thousand years ago. This timeless text offers profound guidance on ethics, governance, and human relationships, and its depth and meaning can only truly be understood through learning the Tamil language itself. Preserving access to Tamil education is not just about language learning—it is about passing on values, history, and cultural identity to future generations.

The Canberra Academy of Languages (CAL) program played a vital role in making this possible. It provided students with an opportunity to continue studying Tamil at the senior secondary level when these courses were not available at their local colleges. For many families, including ours, this program filled a critical gap and ensured that children could continue their language studies without compromising their broader education.

Canberra is home to a vibrant and growing Tamil community. Families here place great importance on maintaining their language and cultural traditions while fully participating in Australian society. Programs like CAL support this balance and enrich the multicultural fabric of the ACT.

Our family has personally experienced the value of this program. Our son, who is now studying at the Australian National University, attended the CAL Tamil program during his Years 11 and 12. The knowledge, confidence, and cultural connection he gained from the program have benefited him immensely, both academically and personally. Having seen the positive impact it had on him, we deeply wish for our daughter to have the same opportunity.

We are genuinely concerned that the discontinuation of this program will deny future students the chance to continue their language studies at the ATAR level. We respectfully urge the ACT Government to support the continuation of Year 11–12 ATAR language courses, including Tamil, by replicating the CAL model or providing an equivalent program from 2026 onwards.

We respectfully ask the Committee to consider the educational, cultural, and community impact of discontinuing these courses. Continued access to Year 11–12 ATAR language programs such as Tamil is vital for preserving linguistic heritage, supporting student wellbeing, and ensuring equitable educational opportunities for all ACT students. We sincerely hope the Committee will recommend continued government support for this program so future students can benefit as our family has.

Yours sincerely,

Senthil Shanmugam & Vaishnavi Senthil Kumar

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