



Submission cover sheet

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

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

Personal submission

I make this submission in my personal capacity as a Tamil speaking person who strongly supports a multicultural society. My views are shaped by lived experience and by a firm belief that linguistic and cultural diversity strengthens the ACT community.

Language, identity, and community wellbeing

Language is central to identity, intergenerational connection, and a sense of belonging. For Tamil speaking families, opportunities to learn and speak Tamil support cultural continuity and community wellbeing. Formal recognition of Tamil through education also affirms the place of long-standing migrant communities within the ACT.

Being able to learn Tamil in New South Wales, when I previously lived there, helped me develop strong roots in my culture. Access to structured language education strengthened my connection to heritage and community. Providing similar opportunities in the ACT would enable other Tamil speaking students to have the same experience.

Educational and cognitive benefits

Teaching Tamil in the ACT school system would support inclusion and equal opportunity. It would allow Tamil speaking students to learn their language in a structured setting and enable non-Tamil students to engage with a major world classical language and culture. Multilingual education is well recognised for supporting cognitive development, literacy, and broader academic achievement.

Students who maintain and develop a heritage language often demonstrate stronger learning outcomes across subjects. Integrating Tamil into the curriculum therefore supports educational success more broadly, not only language proficiency.

Alignment with curriculum and national practice

The Australian Curriculum recognises the value of languages other than English and supports first-language, background-language, and second-language learners. Tamil fits squarely within this framework. Integrating community languages into mainstream education aligns with national curriculum intent and contemporary educational policy.

Tamil is already taught in other Australian jurisdictions, including New South Wales and Victoria. Providing similar opportunities in the ACT would promote consistency and ensure that students in the Territory are not disadvantaged compared with their peers elsewhere. It would also reflect the ACT's commitment to fairness and equitable access to education.

Supporting wellbeing, engagement, and social cohesion

Maintaining heritage languages in schools supports student wellbeing, confidence, and sense of identity. When schools recognise and value students' home languages, students report greater engagement and belonging. Language education also strengthens connections between schools, families, and communities and supports more inclusive learning environments.

Embedding community languages into the curriculum helps normalise multiculturalism rather than treating it as an optional or extracurricular activity. This benefits all students and reflects the lived reality of Australian society.

Migration, diversity, and long-term benefits to Australia

A recent report on Australia's Indian diaspora has outlined the significant social, economic, and civic benefits of Indian migration to Australia. This report recognises the diversity within the Indian community, including Tamil speaking people, and highlights their contributions across education, health, science, business, and public life. Given these benefits to Australia, it is important that this relationship is mutually beneficial. Providing opportunities for Tamil people to continue embracing their

language and culture helps sustain the long-term benefits of migration across generations and supports stronger community connections.

The report, *Understanding Australia's Indian Communities: A Statistical Snapshot*, was published by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade in partnership with the University of Queensland: <https://news.uq.edu.au/2025-08-rich-and-growing-history-indian-migrants-australia>

Noting increasing migration, as indicated in the report, and continued linguistic diversity in Australia, it is important that systems are put in place now to integrate community languages into the curriculum. Education systems must respond proactively to demographic change to support long-term inclusion and social cohesion.

Access to Years 11–12 ATAR language courses

Therefore, access to Years 11–12 ATAR language courses should be enabled immediately and sustained in the years to come. This should apply not only to Tamil but to all community languages, in line with the ACT's commitment to a multicultural society.

Supporting the teaching of Tamil recognises both the size and contribution of the Tamil community and the broader value of community languages. Continuing and expanding language education sends a clear message that diversity is valued and that all communities belong in the ACT.