MLTAV POSITION PAPER – version 2, July 2014
Australian Curriculum for Languages

BACKGROUND
The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) is responsible for developing the Australian Curriculum, whilst implementation decisions rest with individual States and Territories. To date the Victorian government has made no commitment to implementing the Australian Curriculum for Languages, a situation which is of very serious concern to the MLTAV.

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT BY ACARA

1. The MLTAV fully supports the work of ACARA in developing Language-specific curricula as part of the Australian Curriculum (henceforth ‘the AC for Languages’).

2. MLTAV members value opportunities to have input into the AC for Languages through ACARA and local consultation processes, e.g. through the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA). MLTAV-coordinated feedback to drafts has already been extensive (for details www.mltav.asn.au, under ‘Advocacy’) and MLTAV appreciates that this feedback has been considered seriously by ACARA and other organisations.

3. MLTAV is very pleased that the Australian Government has recently committed to the development by ACARA of curricula for Phase 3 Languages (Auslan, Classical languages, Hindi and Turkish). For details: http://ministers.education.gov.au/pyne/keeping-our-commitments-116-million-investment-early-years-language-education.

4. The fact that the finalisation of the AC for Languages by ACARA is taking much longer than anticipated (and thus affecting timelines for possible implementation), is fuelling perceptions of Languages being a ‘difficult’ Learning Area. This inequity of progress is unacceptable to Languages professionals.

VICTORIAN IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AC FOR LANGUAGES – PART ONE: EQUITY AND OPPORTUNITIES; IMPROVING QUALITY OF LANGUAGES EDUCATION
The MLTAV very strongly supports the implementation of the AC for Languages in Victoria, for the following reasons:

5. Students and teachers of Languages in Victoria must be afforded the same opportunities now available in other Learning Areas. These were articulated, in part, by Prof Barry McGaw AO, ACARA Board Chair, in 2010:

“The overall aim is to produce a final curriculum in English, history, mathematics, and science that equips all young Australians with the essential skills, knowledge and capabilities to thrive and compete in the globalised world and information rich workplaces of the current century,” he [Prof Barry McGaw] said.

(ACARA Press Release, 1 March 2010)

Students of Languages will benefit from access to the world-class curriculum developed by ACARA through a more sophisticated approach to the learning of Languages (see #6 below), opportunities which will open up during national collaboration, e.g. the development of a rich range of supporting resources.
for learning, as well as improved mobility opportunities for students and their families when changing schools around Australia.

Teachers of Languages will also benefit through opportunities that will open up through national collaboration, including this more sophisticated approach to the teaching of Languages (see #6 below) supported by the development of a rich range of resources. Professional learning will take on a new dimension, as for the first time Victorian teachers of Languages will be able to engage in conversations with their interstate counterparts based on a common curriculum framework (pedagogical underpinnings, broad structure and terminology).

6. The AC for Languages is widely recognised as qualitatively better than the current AusVELS for Languages, as it is based on the most current research into language acquisition. The AC for Languages moves beyond ‘communicative’ methodology as the underpinning framework, in presenting a more complex view of communication. This new understanding of language interactions involves, for example the moulding of identity through reciprocal, inter- and intraculturally-complex and dynamic communication. The Sub-Strands of the AC for Languages are evidence of this more sophisticated understanding (refer the AC for Languages Draft Preamble, Rationale, Aims and Organisation, Dec 2012 for further details). Furthermore, the fact that the AC for Languages is delivering language-specific curricula is very important in recognising that Languages, whilst sharing common elements, are very individual in nature.

7. The process of curriculum renewal involved in the development of the AC for Languages has engaged Languages professionals in rich conversations concerning learning and teaching over several years, conversations which are aimed at improving Languages education in Australia. Through this process, there is already a strong sense of ownership of the new curricula amongst Languages teachers, in particular. Thus implementation in Victoria should not be a difficult process, especially given also the similarity in basic structure between the new curricula frameworks and the current AusVELS curricula for Languages.

**VICTORIAN IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AC FOR LANGUAGES – PART TWO:**
**LANGUAGES FOR WHICH LANGUAGE-SPECIFIC CURRICULA ARE NOT PLANNED FOR DEVELOPMENT BY ACARA**
The MLTAV acknowledges the complex implementation issues in catering for the more than 35 Languages that are taught in Victorian schools, for which ACARA currently has no plans to develop Language-specific curricula:

8. The MLTAV accepts that, given funding constraints, it is unlikely that ACARA will develop Language-specific curricula beyond the Languages planned under Phases 1-3.

9. The MLTAV urges VCAA to lead and support curriculum development for any Languages that will not be developed by ACARA in a timely fashion, so as to ensure equity for all Languages, a guiding principle which has been supported over many decades by the Victorian Government in the provision of Languages programs. Support could, for example, be in the form of payment to teams of writers to develop frameworks (see below) and Language-specific curricula, preferably in cooperation with MLTAV and Single Language Professional Teaching Associations (for full listing, refer [http://mltav.asn.au/languageslinx](http://mltav.asn.au/languageslinx)).

10. The MLTAV sees merit in developing generic frameworks to assist in the above work. These frameworks would be derived from the curricula developed by ACARA. The following categories would cater for all Languages (noting that the development of frameworks for Auslan, Classical languages and character Languages is not necessary, given that the AC already covers these Languages): Roman alphabet Languages, Non-Roman alphabet Languages.