

The Hon Julia Gillard MP
Deputy Prime Minister
Minister for Education

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House of Representatives
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Dear Minister,

RE: AUSTRALIAN LANGUAGES CURRICULUM

In March 2008, you announced that the National Curriculum will include a languages curriculum from 2011. A later announcement committed \$62.4 million to Asian language education by then.

As an Australian of Hellenic descent, I share the Federal Government's concern that only thirteen per cent of Year 12 students in this country study a language. **I believe part of the solution is for study of languages (including Modern Greek as an option) to be compulsory for all students (K-12).**

The Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Australian Council of State School Organisations and the Group of Eight Universities have all called for greater emphasis on the teaching of languages. The Australian Federal Police, the Australian Defence Force and non-government aid agencies continue to cry out for multilingual personnel, as did *The Flood Report* on intelligence.

According to as John Byron, Director, Australian Academy of the Humanities, **"There is plenty of anecdotal and research evidence that we are failing to pursue all the alternatives we can in trade to do business with those willing to speak their language"**.

The Australian Curriculum should include compulsory language education (including Modern Greek) alongside English, Science and History. Integral to the study of a particular language is the study, and understanding, of the cultural context that developed that language.

Numerous studies have illustrated how the systematic study of grammar improves students' written expression. This is also borne out by multilingual students, who transfer their learning of their second language (such as Modern Greek) into their learning of English.

Parents, principals and other stakeholders in Australian education need to be reminded that the Federal Government thinks that the study of the rest of the world is important. The introduction of language education (including Modern Greek) as a formal part of the Australian Curriculum cements learning and Australia in its regional and global context.

I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,
(name)
(address)