

Note: The sections in the Paper which are headed “What this tells us” will be the basis for the Panel’s recommendations.

Where questions are broken into life stages (early years, school years and adult years), you can provide responses to any or all life stages.

Please indicate clearly at the beginning of any responses you wish to remain confidential.

Unless indicated as confidential, responses will be treated as public information and published on our website. Please see the [Public Submissions Policy](#) for further information.

Name: Johanna (Ans) van Heijster

Question One: Are there any key themes we have not identified to improve literacy across:

The Early Years (0-4 years-old)

The Learning of Languages (other than English).

There is a large amount of research that supports the learning of Languages as important for the development of literacy skills in people of all ages, but particularly in the early and school years. It is a great disappointment to me that after so many years Tasmania still does not have a Languages policy. All other States and Territories in Australia have a Languages policy which makes the learning of Languages mandatory for at least some of the years of schooling. Victoria would be the best State to look at for guidance. In Tasmania schools are encouraged, but not required to offer a Languages program. In The Mercury, Tuesday February 28, 2023, Professor Anne-Marie Morgan, a researcher with the AFMLTA (Australian Federation of Modern Languages Teachers’ Associations) and Professor at the University of South Australia is reported as claiming that: “Australian children are being stripped of their right to succeed academically due to a lack of mandatory second language learning”.

Indeed, secondary language learning is the norm in most countries of the OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development) and those countries invariably score higher in International Testing.

The School Years (5-17 years-old)

The Learning of Languages (other than English)

See my comments above.

The Adult Years (18+ years-old)

The Learning of Languages (other than English)

See my comments above.

In addition there is a body of research showing that the learning of another language in the adult years contributes to a delay in the development of Alzheimer's.

Question Two: What are the three main things we should prioritise doing in:

The Early Years (0-4 years-old)

- More in-class support in schools.
- More support for parents and carers in the early years.
- Introduce mandatory learning of Languages in schools.

The School Years (5-17 years-old)

See my comments above.

The Adult Years (18+ years-old)

See my comments above.

In addition, Adult Education should be restored to its full glory so adults will be able again to learn Languages,

Question Three: Are there any data sets not considered in this paper that should be used to monitor literacy achievement in:

The Early Years (0-4 years-old)

- **Research data that document the advantages of learning Languages.**

The School Years (5-17 years-old)

See my comments above.

The Adult Years (18+ years-old)

See my comments above.

Question Four: If you are a provider of a service, what kinds of guidance would you hope to see in the Community-wide Framework?

Question Five: Are there any other comments you would like to make?

I am looking forward very much to the day that the Tasmanian Government makes the learning of Languages compulsory for all children in government schools from Kinder to Grade 12.

This would, of course, require a massive effort in training languages teachers and the program would have to be implemented incrementally.