

# Convener's Report for 2020

## Canberra Academy of Languages

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Resources website: <https://languages.org.au>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/CanberraAcademyOfLanguages>

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ABN: 73 256 637 048 ACT Incorporated Entity / Association Number: A05776 (September 2016)

Registered as a Specialist Education Provider with ACT Board of Senior Secondary Studies to 31/12/2022



### Program of learning

In the ACT senior secondary curriculum, the design of a program of learning is a matter for colleges and specialist education providers such as CAL. The program of learning operates under the broad guidelines provided in the course framework and course documents published by the ACT Board of Senior Secondary Studies for each subject area. A new suite of modern languages courses came into effect this year, with three levels (Beginning, Continuing and Advanced) and appendices in course documents for each level that outline language-specific information for each accredited language. This provides greater flexibility and capacity to add further languages by including the relevant information in the appendices.

The CAL program of learning for each language that we deliver comprises a unit outline each semester for each language and a term overview for each quarter year (an ACT senior secondary quarter year is approximately, but not exactly, the same span of time as a school term), which provides additional information on the planned weekly schedule. These are published on the class page for each language on our Languages.Org.Au resources website.

The resources website received a makeover this year to accommodate additional languages in the navigation bar, using ISO 639-3 language codes as the naming source for tabs in the top navigation bar on the website. These codes maximise visibility of links for each of the languages on small portable devices such as mobile phone.

Along with our resources website, there are weekly postings to Google Classroom and additional resources on Google Drive within the CAL domain to support students in their language studies.

### CAL programs in 2020

In 2020, CAL delivered programs in French (9 enrolled), German (5), Spanish (4) and Tamil (8), with a total of 26 enrolments in Semester 1 and 21 enrolments in Semester 2, up from 9 in 2019, 5 in 2018 and 2 in 2017. Of the five students who did not continue in Semester 2, one was an international student who returned to his home country; one embarked on a career in the construction industry, one discontinued a tertiary study package and one had to reduce workload on being selected to study engineering with the ANU extension program. Some of this year's enrolments are from Year 9-10 students undertaking early participation in senior secondary programs. This is facilitated by the Board of Senior Secondary Studies' early access provisions – an excellent flexible feature of ACT senior secondary education.

### Venues

Our venues during 2020 (except when teleconferencing was required for COVID safety), as listed on the Programs page on CAL website, were:

- CAL French: Alliance Française, Wednesdays, 5 pm to 7 pm
- CAL German: Alliance Française, Thursdays, 6 pm to 8 pm
- CAL Spanish: Latin-American Cultural Centre, Wednesdays, 5 pm to 7 pm
- CAL Tamil, Alliance Française Fridays; 5 pm to 7 pm.



## Vale James Grieve

Some of you would be aware that Mr James Grieve, [member of the Emeritus Faculty](#) and specialist in French at ANU since 1962, passed away on 15 January 2020, aged 85. Among his contributions in his field, he made a gift of his magnum opus, a set of [fiches correctives](#) for advanced learners of French, to the ANU library's research repository. We added the link to our [list of resources for learners of French](#).

James Grieve was a lecturer in French and supervisor of postgraduate students over decades at ANU. He was a prolific author, whose work included published translations of two of the volumes of Proust's major work, and a Dictionary of Contemporary French Connectors, as well as two of his own novels.



## COVID-19

As the situation evolved with COVID-19 or the Coronavirus, CAL acted on the advice of the ACT Health Directorate, which was published on its website at <https://www.health.act.gov.au/public-health-alert/updated-information-about-covid-19>. Based on that advice, from 26 March 2020, CAL lessons were conducted online via Google Meet for the last part of Term 1 and most of Term 2, resuming face-to-face sessions for most of our classes in Week 17 of Semester 1. Tamil lessons largely used teleconferencing until later in Term 4 (from Week 14). More information about teleconferencing solutions is available on the News page on CAL website. Like most, or all, day schools, we adopted online delivery strategies instead of on-site teaching. CAL languages programs continued to run using our online systems, including Languages.Org.Au and Google Classroom.



## Information evenings

Our information evenings on Thursday 2 April and Thursday 24 September 2020 were held as teleconferences. Those interested were invited to RSVP and a link for the online meeting was then sent to the family. The focus of discussion in September, summarized in briefing notes posted to CAL website afterwards, was about:

- Learning languages in Years 11-12 and early access options for high school students
- Receiving credit for languages studies towards the ACT Senior Secondary Certificate and the ATAR
- Programs offered in, and venues used for, Continuing and Advanced Languages
- Enrolment process
- Learning resources.

## Online presence

We maintain two websites. Our administrative website at <https://cal.act.edu.au> houses our home page, programs information, news items and events schedule. Our resources website at <https://languages.org.au> provides information and links to external sources for our students and other interested learners. There are pages for languages in general as well as featured languages including those currently offered for study in CAL programs. The navigation bar uses ISO language codes to facilitate access on portable devices.

Alongside these two websites, we have class portals on Google Classroom for each of our language classes. These enable us to post additional resources specific to class programs and to maintain communication channels with class members. Each CAL student also has a CAL email account as part of our G Suite for Education platform. During the COVID lockdown, we also conducted online class sessions each week via Google Meet.

We have social media platforms on Facebook (for both our websites) and on Twitter, which broadly reflect updates on the CAL News page. As of 10 June 2020, we had 100 followers on our Facebook page. We thank followers for their interest in our work, our programs and our charter. A social media presence helps to underpin what we can do to expand opportunities for senior secondary students in the Canberra region to continue their learning of languages and to gain recognition for their studies; and to maintain active partnerships with other organisations in languages advocacy.

## Professional learning

With an expanding team and four languages now on the CAL agenda, we have given increasing priority to professional learning for our teachers. Areas of focus for this have, of course, included technical expertise such as management of assessment records through ACS, the online database managed by the Board of Senior Secondary Studies, as well as using Google Classroom and Google Meet. COVID safety provisions, particularly at the end of Term 1 and into Term 2, made the online learning agenda even more important than it was already for us. Another area of particular interest this year was the new senior languages curriculum, including the introduction for the first time of enquiry-based assessment tasks for part of the assessment program. Another key area was formative assessment. This is particularly important for CAL, because half of the recognised participation hours come from set work done outside face-to-face teaching sessions, but also because formative assessment is an important part of good program delivery to ensure learning is on track, alongside summative assessment on which unit scores and course scores are based.

## ANGLS Conference, 17 August 2020

The Australian Network of Government Language Schools (ANGLS) holds an annual conference, hosted by schools on a roster basis, with the meetings generally held in a different state each year. Last year, CAL hosted the conference in Canberra, as reported in the [CAL Convener's report for 2019](#). This year's conference was hosted by the Darwin Languages Centre as a teleconference for COVID safety reasons.



Participants in the event were, in alphabetical order by jurisdiction, the following:

- ACT – Canberra Academy of Languages
- Northern Territory - Darwin Languages Centre & Alice Springs Language Centre
- NSW - NSW School of Languages and Saturday School of Community Languages
- Queensland - Cairns School of Distance Education and Capricornia School of Distance Education Rockhampton
- South Australia – SA School of Languages (the SA Open Access Centre was unable to participate this year because of a conflicting commitment)
- Victoria - Victorian School of Languages

As part of the CAL presentation for the online conference, we posted a video clip by CAL students in each of the languages we are currently running, French, German, Spanish and Tamil. We would like to thank our students for their valuable and thoughtful contributions in discussing their experiences and purposes as language learners.

## Partnerships



The Languages Showcase at the 2020 National Multicultural Festival (NMF) on the Sunday (23 February 2020) was a great success. Congratulations to the showcase coordinator, Jacqui Malins, who brought together an engaging and dynamic program involving contacts through Mother Tongue Multilingual Poetry. The venue for the Languages Showcase at Ainslie Place near London Circuit worked well, providing a well-positioned focal point for the event and a setting better suited for creating a photographic record than it was in 2019.

On the Saturday at the 2020 NMF, CAL was at CMAG for an event titled Exploring the World of Languages with the ACT Community Language Schools Association (ACTCLSA) and the ACT Bilingual Education Alliance (ACTBEA), with a colourful display about languages; a list of languages spoken in Canberra; languages competition fliers; and information about language learning and there were languages activities for children at Civic Library.



The ACT Government has postponed the 2021 the National Multicultural Festival while exploring alternate models for the festival to manage the evolving situation with COVID-19.



A highlight of the year for our partner organisation ACTBEA was the Taste of Languages competition, which concluded on 1 September. School age children and young people were invited to choose a favourite meal or dish which involves another language, then make a short video and write a short piece about it. There were four age categories from preschool through to college and the activity was highly successful, with multiple entries in every age category.



We were pleased that the outgoing Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Chris Steel, was able to speak and present awards at the prize-giving event on 2 November 2020.



Meanwhile, Mother Tongue Multilingual Poetry, which has funding auspiced by CAL, held its final event for 2020 on Monday evening, 23 November 2020. We congratulate Jacqui Malins on the program, which has been most successful and has had a strong following with many regulars attending either in person or via Zoom. Recent events have offered both options, which also meant that interested people from outside the Canberra region could participate. After five years of Mother Tongue Multilingual Poetry, Jacqui is planning to step back from Mother Tongue next year, after a final couple of events in the first half of 2021. She has invited those who would like to get involved in organising Mother Tongue (or its successor) next year to email [mothertonguemic@gmail.com](mailto:mothertonguemic@gmail.com).



## Staff

As noted above, we are looking for a teacher of Japanese for next year. Meanwhile, I am pleased to advise that Anja Ward joined the CAL team for the final quarter-year with CAL German. Anja is a German native speaker who also teaches German at Orana Steiner School and she has been excellent in the role. Anja holds a Bachelor of Arts from The Open University in the UK and a Graduate Diploma in Education from Griffith University in Qld along with a Griffith Award for Academic Excellence. We also thank Barbara Rundel and Stephanie Borst for their excellent work with CAL German earlier in the year. Eleanor Body is likewise highly effective and diligent in running the CAL Spanish program. She has in-country experience both in South America (Ecuador) and in Spain, and she also teaches Spanish at Telopea Park School. In addition to a Bachelor of Languages with a major in Spanish from ANU, she holds a Master of Teaching degree from UC. Uma Ramiah, who is also a teacher of Mathematics and Economics at Dickson College, was a driving force in the establishment of the CAL Tamil program. She is a leading member of the Canberra Tamil community and worked closely with the Tamil community language schools in the ACT during 2019 to circulate information about the

planned program and to generate the uptake that ensured a successful launch. She was also a key author in the Tamil section of the BSSS curriculum document and has a Masters degree in Commerce. Baba Alhadji took over the CAL French program from Term 2 of this year and in doing so has made it possible for the convener to focus on strategic aspects for CAL. Baba completed his schooling through a French-based curriculum in Mali followed by a Masters in English language in Mali and then a Masters in TESOL and Foreign Language Teaching and a Graduate Diploma in Secondary Teaching at UC. He is a fine classroom practitioner, who also teaches French at Narrabundah College. We thank our teaching staff for their commitment and professionalism.

## Laros Industries excursion

On Thursday 19 November, for their final face-to-face session in 2020, the CAL German class visited Laros Industries in Fyshwick. The company name is an anagram of the word “Solar”. Laros specialises in sustainable building design, using modular solutions air-tight doors and windows with insulated barriers in the frames to create a thermal break, and with air-tight breathable membranes. Their principal suppliers include firms in Germany and Austria and the owner-manager’s first language is German. Discussion during the visit was almost exclusively in German. The German teacher reported that after returning to the class venue, there was a lively discussion on the insights gained during the visit. We greatly appreciate the generosity and interest of Michael Kingsland in facilitating it.



## End of year ceremony

Our end of year ceremony is being held at the Alliance Française de Canberra on **Tuesday 15 December 2020** from 2:30 to 3:30 pm. We have a maximum capacity of 50 for the event for COVID safety reasons. Thanks to our colleagues at the Alliance Française for facilitating this event and for a productive collaboration throughout the year. Six are students graduating in Year 12 – two each in French and Tamil, and one each in Spanish and German. Presenters for certificates of completion will include principals from the colleges attended by the French and Tamil students. Some of the graduating students will speak briefly at the event about their language learning experience. The year 12 coordinator will represent the college attended by our Spanish student. We are very appreciative of their participation.

## CAL programs for 2021

The Canberra Academy of Languages is planning to deliver continuing and advanced programs in French, German, Japanese, Spanish and Tamil in 2021. With the addition of Japanese, we have invited expressions of interest from qualified teachers who would like to take on the role as a member of the CAL teaching team. Details are on the CAL News page. In April 2020, Japanese was added to the range of languages featured on our Languages.Org.Au website.

As part of the ACT Government’s 2020-21 budget consultation process, we lodged a submission with a proposal to strengthen languages education in the ACT. Since then, the context has evolved and the scope of our programs and numbers enrolled have changed significantly. The budget consultation website advises that the budget consultation process has closed, but it was also announced in March that the 2020-21 budget had been postponed. Given that the relevant financial year is now under way, I have contacted the ACT Government’s budget consultation team to find out what is now happening with the budget process and whether it is possible to provide relevant updated information as part of the budget consultation process.

## Concluding remarks

Well done to our six graduating students. Sarah Twyman has completed a major in French, while Declan Rose, who returned from Hong Kong last summer, has completed a minor. In German, Martin Magill has completed a major and Levin Hutter completed a minor before going on to an industry traineeship, which we are pleased to learn is going well. Spanish and Tamil both commenced with CAL this year. Abby Smith completed a minor in Spanish, while Ashivinie Muraleetharan and Nivedha Thirunavukkarasu each completed a minor in Tamil.

Thanks to our Advisory Panel for their wise counsel and thoughtful contributions to discussions throughout the year – my wife Rosalind Rice, who is our CAL Director of Studies; Dr Mandy Scott, the Convenor of the Canberra Region Languages Forum and a founder of the ACT Bilingual Education Alliance; Sharee Harrild, President of the Modern Language Teachers’ Association; and Dennis Flannery, former Principal of Belconnen High School, who is also Patron of CAL. Thanks, as well, to our CAL reference group members for their perspectives drawn from a wide range of contexts, whose advice and support we greatly value.

Best wishes to everyone for the summer season – we hope a kinder one than the last time around in terms of climate and weather – and for the new year ahead.

**Frank Keighley** | Convener, Canberra Academy of Languages

Organisational website: <https://cal.act.edu.au> | Resources repository : <https://languages.org.au>