

Multicultural Plan 2024-2027

Transforming lives through learning

Building cultural inclusion and community harmony in NSW
public education



Acknowledgement of Country



We recognise the Traditional Custodians of the Lands where we learn, work and live, paying respect to Elders past and present as teachers of knowledge, songlines and stories. We strive to ensure every NSW Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander learner achieves their potential through quality education.

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Introduction

This Plan describes how we enact the values and Plan for NSW Public Education and observe the multicultural principles of the state to foster social cohesion. Cultural, linguistic and religious diversity is a defining feature of our public education system.

Our learners, their families and our staff identify with a wide range of ancestries. Almost 40% of learners in our early childhood settings and schools speak, or use, a language other than English at home or have a parent or carer who does.

Approximately 26% of students in schools are learning English as an additional language or dialect and 12,500 students are from refugee backgrounds. About 9% of our students identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. This includes students who speak an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander language and/or dialect.

The department will deliver high quality, evidence-based education and care provisions that:

- build intercultural understanding and respect for people from all backgrounds
- advance equitable outcomes, opportunities and experiences for children, young people, staff and families from culturally, linguistically and religiously diverse backgrounds.

Actions within this Plan will be reported in the department's annual report and in Multicultural Policies and Services Program reports to Multicultural NSW.

We recognise that:

- The cultural, linguistic and religious diversity of our learners, students, school communities and workforce is a strength.
- A culturally safe, inclusive and responsive public education system, that is free from discrimination and racism, benefits everyone.
- Culturally responsive and inclusive education programs and environments enhance children's developmental outcomes and students' learning and wellbeing.
- Respectful and collaborative family-school partnerships and actively engaged families and communities enhance the learning and wellbeing of children and young people.
- Strong leadership is needed to drive system improvements and deliver equitable outcomes for all.
- A diverse, appropriately trained and well supported workforce is essential to meet learner and community needs.
- Schools and early education and care services need to be well resourced to meet the needs of learners and families.
- Targeted strategies are needed to ensure equitable access, participation and outcomes.
- Students who are learning English as an additional language or dialect (EAL/D) may have additional learning needs and require ongoing English language support to fully participate in school.
- Children and young people who have experienced trauma or disrupted education require targeted learning and wellbeing support.

Our values



Excellence



Integrity



Equity



Accountability



Trust



Service

Scope

The Multicultural Plan applies to:



all department workplaces



all NSW public schools including public preschools, primary, secondary, central schools, schools for specific purposes and unique educational settings



all staff in NSW public education including leaders, teachers and support staff in all education settings and staff in education support offices



students and learners in all NSW public education settings.

Cultural and linguistic diversity in NSW public schools, 2024*

1 in 3

Students come from a language background other than English

1 in 4

Students are learning English as an additional language or dialect (EAL/D)

1 in 10

Students are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

1 in 63

Students are from refugee backgrounds

1 in 93

Students are newly arrived EAL/D learners

*Education Statistics and Measurement Unit, Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation, NSW Department of Education. Extracted in December 2024

247

In 2024, students from a language background other than English in NSW public schools represented 247 languages.

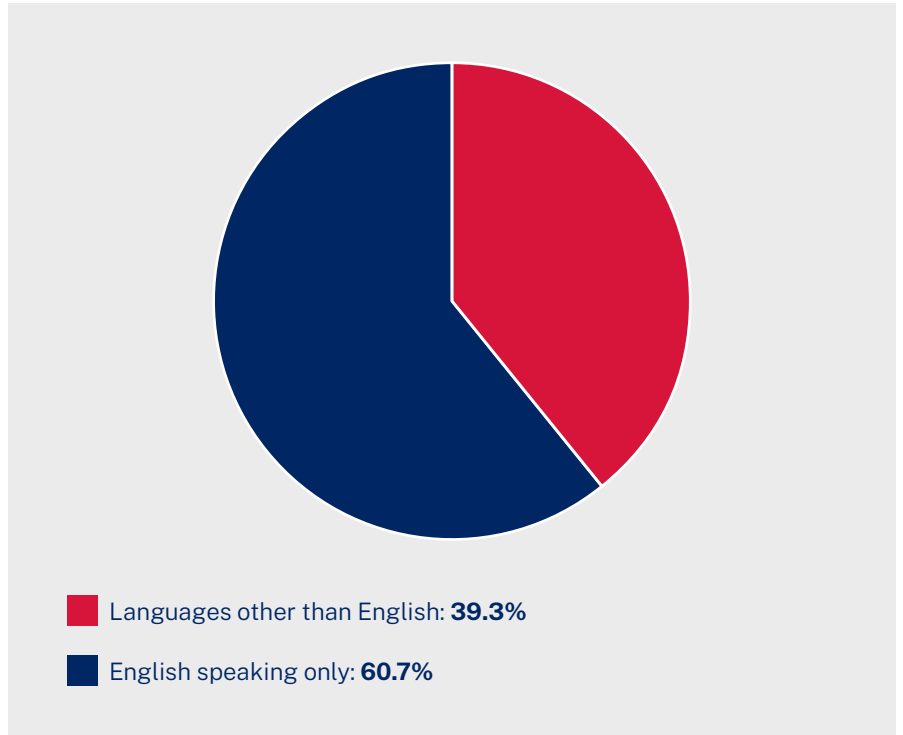


Figure 1: Language background of students in NSW public schools, March 2024

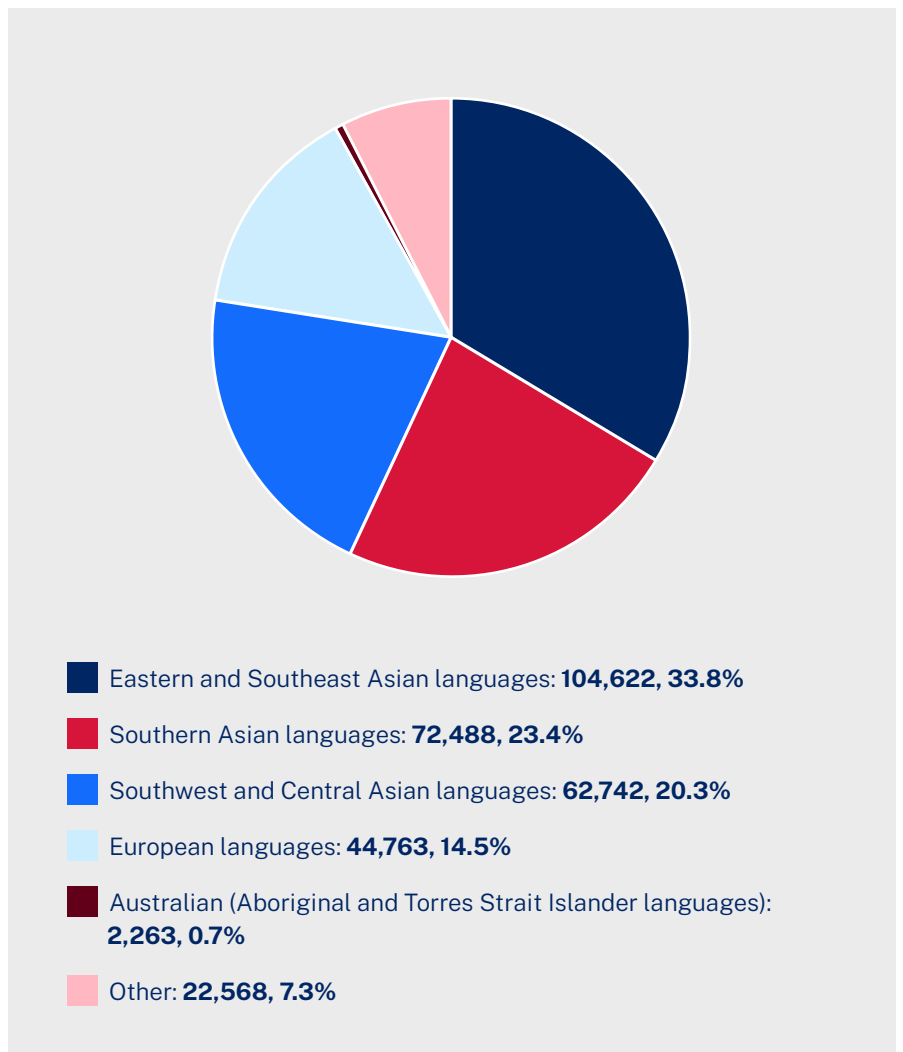


Figure 2: Language backgrounds in NSW public schools by region/language groupings, March 2024

Our focus areas



Advance equitable outcomes, opportunities and experiences

We will deliver:

- Targeted funding to support EAL/D learners, newly arrived students and students from refugee backgrounds.
- Evidence-based pedagogies for EAL/D learners.
- Specialist EAL/D teaching allocations and positions in schools.
- Engagement strategies that improve the participation of students and families from culturally, linguistically and religiously diverse backgrounds in all aspects of school life.
- A system-wide anti-racism strategy to eliminate racism and advance equity for all students across NSW public schools.
- Culturally inclusive and responsive policies and feedback processes.
- Expert support and professional learning to assist schools in responding to racism, discrimination and complex issues relating to cultural inclusion and social cohesion.
- Interpreting and translation services to facilitate communication with families.
- High quality education programs and services for international students.

So that:

- Schools are effectively resourced to support EAL/D learners, newly arrived students and students from refugee backgrounds.
- Schools have the capacity and capability to build effective partnerships with their local communities.
- All students, staff and community members are treated with respect and have equitable outcomes, opportunities and experiences within public education.
- Parents and carers who do not speak or understand English well or who are Deaf, deaf or hard of hearing and/or have a speech communication difficulty can access information about public education and be engaged in their children's learning.

Our goal

Every learner receives a high-quality education that enables them to excel.



Strengthen trust and respect for the teaching profession and school support staff

We will deliver:

- An EAL/D teacher workforce strategy that builds the supply and retention of qualified EAL/D teachers.
- The EAL/D Education Leadership Strategy to strengthen EAL/D education expertise in schools.
- High quality resources and professional learning that extends knowledge of all staff to promote equity.
- Strategies that enhance and support cultural, linguistic and religious diversity across the department.
- Leadership development programs which foster mutual respect, equity and excellence.

So that:

- EAL/D learners have access to appropriately qualified EAL/D teachers.
- EAL/D teaching expertise is valued and promoted in schools.
- Teachers and staff have the knowledge and skills needed to foster equity and address barriers experienced by students and families.
- Teachers and staff from culturally, linguistically and religiously diverse backgrounds have equitable access to employment and career development opportunities.
- Leaders are well equipped to promote equity and social change.

Our goal

Our teachers and staff feel valued, included and supported to perform at their best.



Give children the best start in learning

We will deliver:

- Culturally inclusive and accessible resources for families on early education and care.
- Culturally inclusive and responsive early education and care environments.
- Targeted funding and supports for early learners from families seeking asylum and newly arrived families from refugee backgrounds.
- Professional learning to improve staff capability to provide quality learning and education, and support children and their families as they transition between early education and primary school.

So that:

- Children and families from all cultural backgrounds have equitable access to quality early education and care.
- All children have a sense of belonging in early education and care and are well supported in their transition to school.
- Early education and care staff are confident in delivering culturally responsive early learning programs which recognise and build on the cultural and linguistic capital of children and families.

Our goal

All children have the best start in life.



Deliver outstanding leadership, teaching and learning

We will deliver:

- Effective EAL/D education and intensive English programs.
- Specialist EAL/D pedagogy and approaches.
- Culturally inclusive pedagogy and curriculum, and resources that foster intercultural understanding.
- Differentiated literacy and numeracy, curriculum and assessment practices for EAL/D learners, students from refugee backgrounds and international students.
- High quality language programs, including languages other than English, community languages, Aboriginal languages, and maintenance and revival programs.
- High quality education programs and services for international students.
- Curriculum and co-curricular programs that build all students' understanding of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures.
- Support for collaboration, consultation and partnerships with community organisations and relevant stakeholders.

So that:

- EAL/D learners, newly arrived students and students from refugee backgrounds have equitable access to the curriculum.
- All students are well supported to engage in an academically challenging curriculum.
- Students extend their cultural and linguistic skills and knowledge.
- Students from all cultural backgrounds have equitable access to educational opportunities.
- All students have the knowledge and skills needed to effectively engage with their learning.
- All students engage with local and global issues and have the skills to contribute to a culturally, linguistically, and religiously diverse world.

Our goal

Every student achieves ambitious learning goals every year.



Strengthen student wellbeing and development

We will deliver:

- Targeted support strategies for newly arrived students, including those from refugee backgrounds or seeking asylum.
- Specialist school counselling services for newly arrived EAL/D learners, students from refugee backgrounds and those seeking asylum.
- Transition and bilingual support programs for newly arrived EAL/D learners.
- Strategies that build cultural safety, cultural inclusion and a sense of belonging for all students.
- High quality anti-racism education programs and resources.
- Culturally responsive whole school wellbeing strategies.
- Culturally inclusive student leadership and advocacy programs.

So that:

- Students from refugee backgrounds and students seeking asylum thrive at school.
- Newly arrived students successfully settle into school.
- Students from all cultural, linguistic and religious backgrounds learn in environments that are safe, culturally inclusive and free of discrimination and racism.
- Students from all cultural, linguistic and religious backgrounds are treated with respect and supported to engage positively at school.

Our goal

Every student is known, valued, and cared for.



Provide meaningful post-school pathways

We will deliver:

- Strategies which assist students from culturally, linguistically and religiously diverse backgrounds to achieve literacy and numeracy standards.
- Culturally inclusive and responsive vocational education and careers pathway programs.
- Post-school pathway programs for further education and vocational opportunities for students from refugee backgrounds and students seeking asylum.
- Culturally responsive retention strategies for students from culturally, linguistically and religiously diverse backgrounds.
- Strategies that build collaborative family-school and industry partnerships to support goal setting for post-school pathways.

So that:

- Students from all cultural backgrounds have equitable access to employment and further education opportunities.
- Students from all cultural backgrounds are supported to participate fully in school education and finish school well prepared for life and work in culturally, linguistically and religiously diverse NSW.
- Families and communities are well-informed to support post-school goal settings and decision making.

Our goal

Every student finishes school ready to succeed in their chosen pathway as an informed, responsible citizen.



We'll measure success across these focus areas by critically evaluating data on:

the participation of learners, staff and families from culturally, linguistically, and religiously diverse backgrounds



indicators of student learning and wellbeing



feedback from students, staff and community.





We acknowledge the homelands of all Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people and pay our respect to Country.

Contact us

Our Multicultural Plan is available on the department's website: education.nsw.gov.au

For more information on multicultural programs in NSW public schools, email: multicultural.programs@det.nsw.edu.au

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