



ABORIGINAL LANGUAGES OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

General course

**Year 12 syllabus – What’s changing: Rationale and Aims
For teaching in 2027**

Acknowledgement of Country

Kaya. The School Curriculum and Standards Authority (the Authority) acknowledges that our offices are on Whadjuk Noongar boodjar and that we deliver our services on the country of many traditional custodians and language groups throughout Western Australia. The Authority acknowledges the traditional custodians throughout Western Australia and their continuing connection to land, waters and community. We offer our respect to Elders past and present.

Background

As part of the Western Australian Certificate of Education (WACE) Refreshment for reviewing the nomenclature of courses, the Authority has updated the rationale and aims of each syllabus.

The revised rationale and aims are aligned with the mapping of the general capabilities to provide clear connections between the rationale, aims and syllabus content. The rationale outlines what the subject is about and why it is important. It describes what students can expect to study in the course, along with the knowledge, skills and understandings they will develop throughout the course. It also explains how these can be applied in everyday life and references potential future pathways, outlining how students might connect what they learn in the course to further education, training and employment opportunities.

Important information

WACE Refreshment: Reviewing the nomenclature of courses

This document contains information that will be included in the syllabus effective from 1 January 2027.

Users of the syllabus are responsible for checking its currency.

Syllabuses are formally reviewed by the Authority on a cyclical basis, typically every five years.

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Rationale

The Aboriginal Languages of Western Australia General course gives students access to knowledge and understanding from an Aboriginal perspective, which is embedded in these languages. Each Western Australian Aboriginal language (Aboriginal language) is unique to its people and their Country. It gives voice to the landscape through thoughts and ways of seeing and interpreting the world. When the language of Country is spoken, it brings to life connections with Country and all that this encompasses. This includes the relationships with and between people past, present and future. Learning to use an Aboriginal language can play an important part in the development of a strong sense of identity, pride and self-esteem for all Australian students.

The course content is organised into three content areas: Language knowledge and use, Cultural understandings, and Learning and communication strategies. Unit 3 focuses on people in the natural environment. Students learn about relationships and responsibilities between people and Country, and use their language skills to explore government policies affecting language, regional language revival initiatives and issues, and interrelationships of language and culture. In Unit 4 the focus is on language today, and students investigate the impact of contemporary Aboriginal languages on traditional language use and engage with language revival and maintenance initiatives at national and international levels.

For Western Australian Aboriginal students, learning their own language is crucial to their identity and overall learning and achievements. It enables them to develop a wider recognition and understanding of their language, culture, land, sea, Country and Place, and recognise the significance of these languages in the language ecology of Australia. For all students, learning an Aboriginal language provides a distinctive means of understanding the place where they live, including the relationship between land, the environment and people. The ongoing and necessary reclamation and revitalisation of these languages also contribute to reconciliation.

Engaging with the study of an Aboriginal language develops students' communication skills and contributes to their intellectual enrichment. For non-Aboriginal students, the study of an Aboriginal language provides intellectual challenge and development while also giving them insight into and understanding of Aboriginal cultures and knowledge. In some cases, it provides these students with the opportunity to communicate with Aboriginal people in their own language. For all students, in addition to enhancing their communication skills, it gives them insight into history, language change and language renewal.

Studying an Aboriginal language can open a variety of study and career pathways for students, including language preservation and revitalisation programs, cultural heritage and museums, education, government and policy, non-profit and advocacy work, translation and interpretation, research opportunities, and fieldwork and community engagement.

Aims

The Aboriginal Languages of Western Australia General course is designed to enable students to:

- use linguistic resources when responding to spoken or written texts, in spoken interactions and to generate language
- use knowledge of the interrelatedness of language and culture to respond to texts, to generate language and in spoken interactions
- use processes and strategies to make meaning when listening, interacting, comprehending and generating language
- use knowledge of the interrelatedness of language and culture in spoken interactions.