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The Northern Territory (NT) bilingual program set out a range of goals to provide remote Indigenous communities a bilingual, biliterate and bicultural education and achieved a range of outstanding successes. Yet, when the NT government closed the program in 2008, these achievements were not recognised. The only measure of the program's success was the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) test results for the Northern Territory that year. This paper looks at a range of criteria for evaluating the bilingual program, such as the stated goals listed of the program and those articulated by Indigenous people.

Keywords: Bilingual Education, Northern Territory

1. The Bilingual Education Program: An introduction

The bilingual program operated in the Northern Territory (NT) of Australia from 1973 until 2008. It ran in 25 schools, providing learning for students in English and some 24 Indigenous languages. It was established in response to the Government's call for remote Aboriginal children to have "their primary education in Aboriginal languages" (Department of Education 1973a: 1), sparking a period of remarkable creativity, educational engagement and innovation. By 1974 programs in ten schools were in progress or preparation, and advisors Geoff O'Grady and Ken Hale wrote:

> We are extremely impressed with the Northern Territory bilingual program – so much so that we are inclined to assert that this program constitutes one of the most exciting educational events in the modern world. It is, of course just the beginning and has a long and difficult road ahead of it. However, an increasing number of dedicated and highly competent Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal people are becoming committed to the program and devoting their total range of talents to it. (O'Grady and Hale 1974: 2).

An extensive literature produced by the NT Education Department's 'Bilingual Unit', formed in 1974, documents this long and difficult road. Working in the early years with external experts, the Bilingual Unit developed a centralised program. Its goals, models and methods, monitoring and adaptations are articulated in handbooks, professional learning materials, annual reports and newsletters. The progress of the program in individual schools, some short-lived and some enduring, is also documented here. This literature serves as the key data for this paper, which proposes a framework to evaluate the Northern Territory bilingual program.

Evaluation of the program should start with its stated goals. Eight aims were set out for the bilingual program in the 1973 'Handbook for Teachers in Bilingual Schools' and largely maintained in the 1986 document (Watts, McGrath & Tandy 1973; Department of Education 1973b; Northern Territory Department of Education (NTDE) 1986). Though various editions of the handbook state that the goals are listed in no particular order, English language and literacy were prioritised in many ways. In his review of NT education in the late 1990s, Bob Collins noted that while Aboriginal people saw bilingual education as "the first real recognition by Government of the value of Aboriginal language, culture and law", "government and bureaucratic proponents" saw it leading to "improved school attendance and better outcomes in English literacy and numeracy" (Collins 1999: 121). The full set of aims encompassed various perspectives:

1. Teaching and learning English language and literacy
2. Learning through first languages, to allow access to and mastery of the concepts and knowledge in the curriculum
3. Develop a positive self-concept in each child, through mastery of both languages in teaching and learning aspects of traditional and modern cultures
4. Develop oral English skills to allow transition to English as the main language of instruction at year 5

5. Promote the development of teaching skills, teaching responsibility and formal educational leadership in Aboriginal staff
6. Develop competency in reading and writing in students' first language
7. Develop closer communication, involvement and mutual understanding between school and the community it serves and promote in children and their parents a positive attitude towards education and school attendance
8. Develop a better understanding of both cultures, among students and adults in the school and wider community. (NTDE 1986: Part 2)

By the 1980s, as more Indigenous staff became involved in and committed to the program, many placed emphasis on cultural and language maintenance and indigenisation of schools (Harris & Devlin 1999; Yunupingu 1999). In 1987, the 'Cross Cultural Issues in Education' Conference[1] was held in Batchelor in the Northern Territory. Two-thirds of the 300 attendees were Indigenous, drawn largely from the staff of the NT bilingual program. Editors of the conference proceedings Christine Walton and William Eggington (1990: xi) wrote:

> Many Aboriginal teachers and community members have found bilingual education not only a preferable model of education for their children, but also a means whereby they have been able to take their rightful place in the schooling of their children. They see it as a vehicle for self-determination and a means whereby they have been able to incorporate their languages and cultures into the school in order to make the school an instrument of language and culture maintenance, rather than destruction.

This emphasis was not a departure from the original stated goals. From the outset the focus was on the development of students' and adults' bilingual, biliterate and bicultural skills, and so it was never a case of 'either/or' but 'both/and' (Department of Education 1973b: 3). The use of first language, particularly in the early years, was intended to support conceptual development and access to the curriculum. Students' development of traditional identity, language and literacy was an end in itself, but also a means to English language development and to educational success. In her response to the 1998 announcement to end the bilingual program[2], Warlpiri educator Helen Morton expressed this:

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[1] This was a parallel event to the 8th AILA World Congress (Association Internationale de Linguistique Appliquée), held in Sydney that year.

[2] The closure was threatened but in the face of considerable protest, the program was re-instated as Two-Way Learning in 1999.

> It's really important to us that we keep our language strong. We don't want to lose it. I know, I worked at Yuendumu Language Centre for ten years and fourteen years here at Willowra school. English is really hard for kids in transition and pre-school to understand, but Warlpiri they can understand easy. They learn it by looking at the alphabet. We don't want to lose bilingual education, we want our kids to learn both ways. (NTDE 1999a: 9)

Evaluation and appraisal of the bilingual program (renamed 'Two-Way Learning' in 1999) is both complex and controversial (Silburn, Nutton, McKenzie & Landrigan 2011; Devlin 1995, 2009a), as was the program itself. In 2008, after the release of the results from the newly introduced National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN), the NT government announced in a press release that the first four hours of every school day were to be taught in English (Scrymgour 2008), claiming that schools with bilingual programs had worse results in the tests than schools without. The NT Education Department dismantled what had remained of the bilingual program[3]. Brian Devlin quickly refuted the data presented for these claims as poorly selected, incomplete and incorrectly treated (2009a: 13). In reality the NAPLAN results are uniformly low in remote settings where children are speakers of a language or dialect other than Standard Australian English, irrespective of program type (Devlin 2009b). NAPLAN is a set of national standardised tests for students at years 3, 5, 7 and 9, in reading comprehension, writing, English structures, spelling and punctuation and numeracy. The appropriateness of NAPLAN testing as a measure of educational achievement and English language development for second language learners has been questioned (Wigglesworth, Simpson & Loakes 2011; Angelo 2012; House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs 2012: xix).

Given the range of goals outlined above, an appraisal of the bilingual program is poorly served by NAPLAN data alone. In this paper, a broader set of criteria is drawn upon to evaluate the program. In particular, it includes aspects of the

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[3] By 2008 the program had in reality already been wound back significantly. See Nicholls (2005) for a discussion of the earlier stages of this process. However in 2008, some schools such as Yirrkala in the north and Areyonga in the south still ran strong programs, and actively resisted the closure of the program. In other schools the Program had already been reduced to a couple of hours or less per week of an 'own language' program. With the program dismantled, professional learning, accreditation and quality assurance structures were not available and so the long term viability of quality Bilingual Education Programs was made impossible.

program that many Indigenous people see as measures of success: their involvement in their schools, teacher training, curriculum development, bilingual development and language and culture documentantion through curriculum and resource production. Such achievements are not included in evaluation by the NT government or the Department of Education, despite being included in the list of aims of the program. International literature (UNESCO 2008a, 2008b; Bernard Van Leer Foundation 2004; see also Harris 1995: 13-18) and research on the local remote education setting identify the same factors as significant in achieving student outcomes; culturally responsive curriculum and practice, L1 and multilingual instruction to support all areas of learning, presence and engagement of family and community (Silburn et al. 2011: 33-40, commissioned by the NT Department of Education).

Individual student academic achievement in English literacy and numeracy are of course important, and consistent poor results in these areas across remote schools in the Northern Territory are a great concern, as are extremely low retention and completion rates at secondary level. In this paper I discuss language, literacy and numeracy assessment in §2.1, expanding on Brian Devlin's (1995) three phases of evaluation of the bilingual program, before considering the wider range of measures in §2.2, and then looking to the future in §3.

2. Evaluating the Program – student academic performance

Much of the suspicion and criticism by senior education administrators and politicians of the bilingual program came from the perception that the program could not deliver adequate outcomes in English language, literacy and numeracy, which would better be achieved through English-only programs. This latter propososition is not borne out by the NAPLAN results since 2008, if these are taken as the measure for outcomes in English language and literacy. In the years the program was running no body of evidence was systematically gathered to compare student outcomes in English-only and bilingual schools. However, the meta-analysis carried out by Silburn et al. (2011) found that "studies by the NT Department of Employment, Education and Training (DEET 2004) and academic researchers (Batten, Frigo, Hughes & Namara 1998; Devlin 1995; Lee

1993; McKay et al. 1997; Gale, McClay, Christie & Harris 1981; Murtagh 1982) offer limited but consistent evidence that some NT bilingual education programs have been comparatively effective in improving student academic results" (Silburn et al. 2011: 26). Certainly there is no evidence that 'English-only' remote schools perform better than bilingual schools. Wide-spread, systematic testing and collation of student performance data is a relatively recent phenomenon, in Australia, and indeed world-wide. As only a handful of bilingual education programs remain, the dataset for any potential comparison between student outcomes in remote locations in English-only and bilingual education programs is now extremely limited.

However, there were processes for gathering data and evaluating student progress in the bilingual program. Devlin (1995) has identified three phases of evaluation of the bilingual program between 1973 and 1993. In the first phase the fledgling program's implementation was monitored, and some observations on student performance in English were made. In particular, concern was raised as the transfer to English literacy was later than expected. Originally transfer was expected at grade 3, but schools found the process of learning oral English, first language literacy and then making to the shift to English language literacy took longer than expected. 1986 Bilingual Handbook revised this and so transfer to English literacy took place at grade 5 (NTDE 1986: 7 – Aim 4). In addition, evaluations found a lack of quality English language instruction and staff trained in teaching English as a Second Language (NT DET 1979: 37-40; Spring 1980: 22). This remains an on-going problem, still unresolved across remote schools, in bilingual and English-only schools (Collins 1999; Northern Territory Department of Education and Training (NTDEET) 2003; Simpson, Caffery & McConvell 2009; Silburn et al. 2011; Wilson 2014).

In the 1980s attention turned to measuring student academic achievement, by comparing test results of similar student cohorts attending English-only and bilingual education programs (see Gale et al. 1981; Murtagh 1982). Devlin (1995) has characterised this as the second phase of evaluation. Overall, he concluded that the results from the handful of schools monitored in this process are mixed, with some results lower from the students in the bilingual schools, than in non-bilingual schools, and some higher, particularly at the year 7 level. However, this

program of testing was resource intensive, so remained limited to a small set of schools and was shortlived.

The third phase is the appraisal or accreditation process of the 1990s. This process was required for all bilingual schools. It included more input from the local community, and community involvement was an evaluation criterion. Much was at stake, as an unsatisfactory report resulted in the school losing its bilingual status and resourcing. Student progress from the Primary Assessment Program was also included, though the data was not uniformly collected, centrally collated or compared across schools or program types. Devlin notes that despite the rich qualitative data and school-wide involvement in the reports, many did not include student performance data but rather "commented fairly broadly on progress being made by students in attaining literacy and numeracy" (1995: 33). However, the process "generally found […] that schools with bilingual programs were performing as well as or better than the comparison schools" in English, with the added accomplishements in the student's first language (Devlin 2009b: 7).

The accreditation process had the advantage of forcing schools to reflect on their practices and to document strengths and weaknesses in all areas of program implementation and delivery, but again, did not generate a conclusive dataset of student attainment. However, ex-teacher-linguist and Regional Linguist in the bilingual program, Carmel O'Shannessy, argues that though the data might not have been compiled, bilingual school programs were mindful and committed to the need to track student progress in English as a Second Language and, to a lesser extent, first language literacy development (Carmel O'Shannessy p.c. 2013). Extensive student outcome reporting was carried out and made available to students and families. This profiling data can also be found throughout the accreditation documents and in the 'Annual Reports of Teacher/Linguists in the bilingual programs in NT Schools'.

More recently, system-wide testing regimes, such as the Multi-level Assessment Program (MAP), administered between 2001-2004 and now the national-wide NAPLAN regime (2008-), have been introduced and are carried out in all Australian schools, perhaps marking a fourth phase of student outcome evaluation. Devlin (2005) reviewed the available MAP results from a set of schools with a Two-Way Learning program and a set of 'like' schools, comparing

test scores for reading at years 3, 5 and 7. Similar to previous results, the scores for year 3 students in Two-Way programs were lower than those from 'like' schools, yet similar at year 5 and higher at year 7. As the dataset is small, particularly with the alarming drop in student participation in all schools at years 7 and 9, Devlin warns that the findings are indicative rather than conclusive. However, such results are as the literature on bilingual education might predict: lower outcomes in English language and literacy measures at year 3 for students in Bilingual programs as the focus is on learning skills and concepts through first language, but with results beginning to converge around year 5 (Ramirez 1991; Thomas & Collier 1997). By year 7, the benefits of bilingual education should be illustrated in measures of first and second language skill and in content knowledge, with students from such programs performing as well or better than students taught wholly in a second language.

2.1 Evaluation of the Bilingual Program – a wider view

The aims discussed in the introduction of this paper, which belong to a broader evaluation of the bilingual program, have received some attention in the literature and can be grouped under the following headings:

1. Team teaching and Indigenous control of schools, community involvement (See Batten et al. 1998; Graham 1986, 1999; Harris 1995; McKay et al. 1997; Marika 1999; Ngurruwutthun & Stewart 1997; Tamisari & Milmilany 2003; Warlpiri Triangle Reports, eg. NTDE 1999a; Yunupingu 1999).
2. The development of local Indigenous and bilingual pedagogy, curriculum and materials (See Gale 1997; Marika-Munggiritji & Christie 1995; Cooke 1991; Ngurruwutthun 1991; Tamisari & Milmilany 2003; Spring 1980; Watson 1988; Watson-Verran 1992; also Warlpiri Triangle Reports from the 1990s onwards).

To discuss these criteria for evaluating the bilingual education program, it is valuable to consider the notion 'two-way'. Aboriginal people often talk about two-way knowledge: being strong in both Indigenous identity and knowledge and in non-Indigenous systems[4]. In the context of the bilingual education program, 'two-

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[4] Stephen Harris (1990) has used this term extensively in describing the design of NT bilingual education programs, which cover Indigenous and non-Indigenous curriculum areas. However, Hoogenraad highlights that the term (or similar) is used by Indigenous people in a less restricted sense (see Hoogenraad 2001: 134-135 for a discussion). See Nicholls (2005) on the adoption of the term 'Two-Way Programs'.

way' places Indigenous staff, language, knowledge and pedagogy in a position of equality alongside non-Indigenous staff, English language curriculum, pedagogy and outcomes. The key concept in Devlin's definition of 'two-way' philosophy is:

> an underlying model of bilingual/bicultural education in which power is shared, the curriculum is balanced, the existence of competing knowledge systems is acknowledged and the program is related to language use and cultural observances in the community.   (Devlin 2005: 26)

The practice of teaching in Indigenous and non-indigenous teams formed the basis for the negotiation, development and articulation of 'two-way' in the bilingual program and for a collaborative, informed and respectful approach to a bilingual and bicultural school environment (Department of Education 1975: 24; Graham 1986; Batten et al. 1998; McKay et al. 1997; NTDE 2004). The 1974 Advisory Committee report listed 'the teaching team' first in 'Educational Considerations in Devising and Implementing the Program':

> The teaching team in the schools in Aboriginal communities consists of Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal members. Each group should contribute its special strengths, complementary to those of the other group, to the bilingual education programme. These strengths included the professional training, native English and cultural skills of the non-Indigenous teachers; and the language skills, emotional security, knowledge of the community and its culture, formal teacher training and role as mediators between Indigenous and non-Indigenous culture. As a result a redefinition of the roles of Aborigines and non-Aborigines in the teaching team is recommended, so that the strengths of each group may be fully realised, to the benefit of the children (Department of Education 1975: 25).

2.2 Team Teaching

Team Teaching came to be articulated as a three-part process: Learning Together, Planning Together and Teaching Together (NTDE 1986). 'Learning Together' sessions, whole school professional development meetings designed to exchange cultural and professional knowledge, were generally co-ordinated by the teacher-linguist. Such professional learning developed teaching competency in both Indigenous and non-Indigenous staff. It was also crucial in ensuring that the knowledge and skills held by Indigenous staff, largely outside of the mainstream

educational knowledge, were recognised and not dominated by non-Indigenous knowledge. This was particularly important given the constant staff-turnover amongst non-Indigenous staff, who had to learn anew to appreciate the skillset of the Indigenous staff in the novel and often daunting cultural setting. Learning together's were crucial for providing professional learning on English as a Second Language pedagogy, first and second language development and bilingual education methodology. Formal evaluation of this professional learning has not been undertaken, but in educators' evaluations, 'Learning Together' was an important aspect of the bilingual program in their schools (eg. Lajamanu Accreditation report, NTDEET 1999b) and a significant aspect of relationship building and power sharing.

Team teaching involved Indigenous and non-Indigenous teams planning and teaching together, engaging in professional and collegial discussions about the students in the school, their knowledge base and strategies for building on this. Effective teaching and learning relies on a teacher's knowledge of their students, and Indigenous teaching staff were best placed to assist visiting teachers in appraising students and their progress. As speakers of the students' first language, they are also best placed to support students' learning, in particular in the early years (Silburn et al. 2011). Bowman, Pascoe & Joy (1999) have documented the effectiveness of planning and teaching together in teaching literacy in English and first language at Maningrida school. In teaching maths the use of first language to develop students' conceptual knowledge, supported through learning, planning and teaching together, has also been positively evaluated (Cooke 1991; Watson-Verran 1992; Wilkinson & Bradbury 2013).

In the teaching team, and in other arrangements, such as mentor and community adult educator programs, Indigenous teachers and assistant teachers were supported in formal training. The greater number of trained Indigenous teachers and teacher assistants in schools with a bilingual program as compared to schools without is evidence of the success of this aspect of the bilingual education program (Gale 1990; Harris 1995; Hoogenraad 2001).

2.3 Indigenous Pedagogy and Vernacular Resource Production

Indigenous researcher and bilingual educator Dr. Marika (1999) has provided a professional and personal reflection on vernacular literacy research and production, and its role in developing Indigenous pedagogy at Yirrkala school (see also Marika-Munggiritji & Christie 1995). The inextricable link she observes between the development of vernacular literacy and teaching materials, and the development of Indigenous curriculum and pedagogy is evident in other locations also. Marika reflects on how language resources were developed collaboratively, with elders, educators and other community members, often with the assistance of linguists and teacher linguists. The materials document Indigenous knowledge including cultural knowledge, such as land tenure, ceremonial life, social practice and organisation, local history and dreamtime stories; knowledge of the natural world, such as plants, animals, ecosystems, as well as hunting, tracking and resource use. Educators have skilfully woven these themes into the various local curricula, incorporating science, maths and social science along with language and literacy outcomes. This allowed the development of pedogagy and Indigenous teacher competence in teaching conceptual knowledge through first language, building bridges to students' learning in English. Examples of such curricula include local documents: Galtha Rom and Ganma at Yirrkala School; Dhanarangala Murrurinydji Gaywanagal, later Gattjirrk at Milingimbi School; the Warlpiri theme cycle in the four Warlpiri schools (NTDE 1987); all of which fed into the Northern Territory Curriculum Framework: Indigenous Language and Culture Outcomes (NTDEET 2002). These documents and the growth of local pedagogy and of local expertise through their development are significant innovations and outcomes of the NT bilingual education program.

The production of literacy and teaching materials for students' first language was also central to the development of NT bilingual programs. Gale (1997) has written on the various phases of the development of Indigenous literacy and literate practices and the prodigious output from communities in the NT. Harris has described some important socio-political purposes of vernacular literacy developed in the bilingual schools (1995: 8-13). The NT bilingual program is responsible for the development of literacy practices in some 24 Indigenous languages and the production of thousands of texts in some of the world's most

endangered languages[5]. Considering the collections created in Central Australian languages alone, the output is impressive, a major outcome of the NT bilingual program. In Warlpiri language, at the Bilingual Resource Development Unit (BRDU) at Yuendumu and the Literacy Production Centres at Willowra and Lajamanu, for instance, over 700 titles, including early to advanced readers, fiction and reference works, and community newsletters have been produced. Dreamtime stories, contact histories, documentation of cultural practices and artefacts, materials on the plant and animal worlds produced by Warlpiri people provide a rich knowledge base and data for the extensive Warlpiri Dictionary (see Disbray 2014 for a discussion). Similar collections were produced in Pitjantjatjara (300 titles) and in Pintupi and Pintupi-Luritja (over 400 titles) (NT DET 2009a).

2.4 Community Involvement

The development of local pedagogy, curricula and resources involved a wide range of community members in the school enterprise, in addition to the school staff of local teachers, assistant teachers and literacy workers. Elders and artists, family members had a purpose and role in the education of the children of their communities. Culture days, bush trips, and country visits drew community members in and tangibly incorporated local knowledge in school. It allowed the formal transmission of local cultural knowledge to students throughout their schooling. Further, the production of community newsletters through the schools provided a local news source and a purpose for literacy, shared by all. This community involvement and relevance of the school to local people were key to promoting formal education in communities, where such practice was new and its recent history often oppressive.

The closure of the bilingual programs removes the impetus and support for collaboration, meaningful roles for Indigenous staff, professional learning and the further development of pedagogy, curriculum and resources. It also denies students access to cultural knowledge and recognition of community identity in the school setting, through planned first language instruction. This represents an

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[5] The 'Living Archive of Aboriginal Languages' project, a partnership between Charles Darwin University and NTDE (http://www.cdu.edu.au/centres/laal/?q=laal) will see these valuable materials digitally archived and made available with new media formats in and beyond school settings.

enormous but hidden loss. Warlpiri educator Barbara Martin, speaking at the 2009 Warlpiri Triangle Workshop, is aware of this:

> We used to support each other and work together. But now, this four hours English, it's separate. We don't really know what we are doing, we don't know how to fit Warlpiri. Warlpiri is important too, for our kids, because they understand Warlpiri. They can start learning a lot of new things, school things in Warlpiri. And before it was working really well, when we had team planning, support from a teacher linguist, learning togethers, team teaching, all of that. (NTDEET 2009: 10)

3. A future for Bilingual Education?

Since the 2008 press release, no policy has been released to direct NT DoE staff on matters associated with language teaching or bilingual programs. In 2010 a Draft 'Literacy Framework for students with English as an Additional Language' (NTDET 2010) was circulated, though never became policy. The Framework focussed on English literacy, not mentioning oral language development in English and paying lip service to first language and culture. It allowed communities to request first language programs in their schools, but there was no process for lodging and responding to such requests. There was no clarification of the assertion that "All Schools must run English as an Additional Language Approaches" (p. 2) and no action to ensure the recruitment of teachers with English as an Additional Language teaching qualifications or to provide professional learning in this area.

In 2012 policy development began anew under the instruction of outgoing Department Chief Executive Officer Gary Barnes and in response to the Country Liberal Party's then leader Terry Mill's campaign commitment to re-instating the bilingual program. The draft policy (Department of Education 2013a, 2013b, 2013c) 'English as an Additional Language/Dialect' outlines the requirements of EAL/D provision in a range of contexts, including schools providing bilingual instruction and biliteracy instruction and is accompanied by a rigorous set of guidelines for schools with such programs. The policy was accepted by the Department of Education Executive but returned for revision by the Minister. At

the end of 2013, the English as an Additional Language Unit, responsible for developing policy and providing professional learning, was disbanded.

National developments relevant to languages policy in the NT are worth consideration. The development of the Australian Curriculum – Australian Languages has the potential to legitimate and formalise Indigenous language teaching in schools nationally. However, in its current form, it does not accommodate a bilingual education model. In any case, curriculum is not what is required in the NT, but rather policy, implementation strategies, professional learning about first and second language development, Indigenous teaching training, accountability measures and resourcing. The release of the National Report 'Our Land, Our Languages: Language Learning in Indigenous Communities' (House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs 2012), with its wealth of recommendations on language in education appeared to go unnoticed. Of particular relavance to policy making in the NT is the recommendation (14) that "state and territory governments to provide adequately resourced bilingual school education programs for Indigenous communities from the earliest years of learning, where the child's first language is an Indigenous language" (xix).

In late 2013 the Northern Terrritory Education of Department commissioned a review of Indigenous Education. In the opening section of the draft review, which appeared in February 2014, mention is made of biliteracy and the use of first language in learning (Wilson 2014: 7):

> This review has made a decision to focus on the English language skills and knowledge that underpin success in the western education system. Some people will find this a challenging position. The recommendation is based on the view that Indigenous children learn English in the way that other children learn English: through rigorous and relentless attention to the foundations of the language and the skills that support participation in a modern democracy and economy. The review does not support continued efforts to use biliteracy approaches, or to teach the content of the curriculum through first languages other than English.

Despite the successes of the bilingual education program discussed in this paper, it seems that the goals, aspirations and understandings which underpinned them have no place in the current phase of education policy in the Northern Territory.

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