



DEF AUS 18

# LANGUAGE CAPABILITY WITHIN COMBAT BRIGADES

PITCHER

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# ABSTRACT

We invest considerable resources in the acquisition of regionally and operationally important languages then fail to invest in through-life management of the capability – something we would not tolerate with any other capability. A Brigade Language Manager would actively manage Languages other than English capability, improving utility for Army.

The Australian Army is a small force that will increasingly rely on its people as its ‘competitive advantage’ as our doctrinal and technological advantages diminish. Whether it its building closer bonds with partner militaries, advise and assist missions or delivering humanitarian assistance/disaster relief, language and cultural awareness is a ‘force multiplier’ that will be vital in ensuring our ‘persistent presence’ in strategically important areas. However, as it is currently structured Army’s management of LOTE for tactical and operational level engagement is sub-optimal with the majority of linguists’ skills atrophying shortly after acquisition.

This is largely due to language aptitude mismanagement, unclear language capability requirements and a disconnect between formal training at the Defence Force School of Languages and linguist capability employment post-graduation. Improvements in the management of the regional Languages other than English capability and the appointment of Brigade Language Managers to coordinate linguists could streamline current efforts with minimal increase in resources.



# PROPOSAL AND OUTCOMES

This proposal is largely aimed at building and sustaining a pool of basic linguists to increase the ability of units to interact at the person-to-person level on International Engagement activities. If fully implemented, outcomes would include:

- SO3 International Engagements within Combat Brigades taking on an additional facilitating role as Language Manager, ideally as a graduate of the Defence Force School of Languages and supported by WO2/SGT linguists from formation and unit S2 Cells.
- A more efficient means of broad LAT to assess the Army's full linguist potential.
- Inclusion of LAT in all ab initio training.
- Access to LAT results by unit clerks and Brigade Language Managers to enable better management of LOTE potential.
- Rescheduling of Joint Tactical Interaction courses to better support force preparation for IE activities within Combat Brigades.
- More frequent and enabled assessment of JTI graduates (post-immersion and additional development during IE activities) to allow attainment of the Basic Language Allowance; providing individual incentive to drive through-life maintenance of acquired skills
- Resourced language sustainment training to empower language managers to mitigate skills fade and provide opportunities for basic linguist to develop sufficiently to access Basis Language Allowance, reinforcing success with individual financial incentive.