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## **E-Language**

### **VICTORIAN COMMUNITY LANGUAGES SCHOOLS EDUCATION ROUND TABLE HELD ON MAY 16, 2008 in MELBOURNE**

The Minister for Education, The Hon Bronwyn Pike MP opened the Round Table on Community Languages Schools Education in Victoria last Friday May 16, 2008 at the Old Treasury Building in Melbourne. This was an initiative of Community Languages Australia and the Ethnic School Association of Victoria, which was negotiated with the Minister earlier this year and supported and implemented by the Ministerial Council on Languages, ESL and Multicultural Education (MACLEM). The Council is chaired by Liz Beattie MP Parliamentary Secretary to the Premier on Multicultural Affairs.

The Round Table was chaired by Steve Herbert MP, the Parliamentary Secretary for Education. The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) undertook the administrative and planning aspects and fully supported the Round Table.

Principal Associations, Regional Offices of DEECD, VMC, Tertiary Institutions, VSL, VCAA, School Principals, Department of Human Services, ESAV and Community Languages Australia were all represented.

**Question:** You maybe be asking; **Why the long introduction, listing all the above?**

**Answer:** To highlight the significance of the event and the support it attracted from key stakeholders including the Minister and two Parliamentary Secretaries, MACLEM and DEECD.

**Purpose:** The purpose of the Round Table was to raise awareness about community languages schools to a range of key stakeholders and seek solutions to issues that are often raised in relation to community languages schools. It was an opportunity to discuss ways for creating stronger links.

The Minister emphasised the importance of languages education in Victoria and the role of community languages schools play in Victoria. Community languages schools and VSL provide complementary provision to Victoria's mainstream schools in teaching languages. She indicated that we need to seek to capitalise on the opportunities to ensure a stronger, integrated delivery model.

Steve Herbert MP guided the discussion which was focused on outcomes.

Stefan Romaniw, Executive Director of Community Languages Australia gave an overview of National and State delivery by community languages schools, the importance of the MCEETYA Languages Statement and Plan. He also provided information on the important project funded by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) under the MCEETYA Plan which involved *Improved National Coordination and Quality Assurance*. The Victorian Government's contribution to per capita funding, training and PD and administrative support was recognised. He also highlighted the facts that make community languages schools deliverers of credible programs which include; being a legal entity, having curriculum documents which are in line with the State's Framework, teachers and instructors undertaking training and professional development and that there is

evidence of strong teaching and learning practices and that all funded schools must undergo an accreditation process.

The presentation can be viewed on

<http://www.communitylanguagesaustralia.org.au/Presentation/ROUNDTABLES-08.ppt>

The Quality Assurance Framework was also discussed as a vehicle that will take schools into the future. <http://www.communitylanguagesaustralia.org.au/QualityAssurance.php>

A draft Statement of Commitment was presented for discussion and when completed will reinforce the role community languages schools play. It will raise greater awareness in mainstream schools of this role and the Government's commitment. The draft Statement of Commitment can be viewed on

[http://www.communitylanguagesaustralia.org.au/Documents/Statement\\_Compmitment.pdf](http://www.communitylanguagesaustralia.org.au/Documents/Statement_Compmitment.pdf)

Carol Kelly, Assistant General Manager, Targeted Programs Branch provided an overview of DEECD position highlighting the importance of cooperation, partnerships and the need to have a coordinated approach in delivering languages education in Victoria. Building on our combined strengths, capitalising on our resources is paramount. Taking the message out about community languages school and engaging key stakeholders at a local level is a model that needs to be pursued.

The presentation can be viewed on

<http://www.communitylanguagesaustralia.org.au/Presentation/Carol-Presentation.ppt>

Purposeful discussion followed which provided useful action points.

Some of the outcomes were:

- That consultation be conducted around Victoria on community languages schools and their role and to provide an opportunity to discuss and comment on the draft Statement of Commitment at regional level.  
This will engage more mainstream schools in the overall discussion
- Seek ways of building stronger communities around mainstream host schools and community languages schools which use Government school facilities
- Seek creative community partnerships that will deliver better results

### **A very useful exercise!**

The ESAV and Community Languages Australia express their gratitude to the Minister, the Parliamentary Secretaries, MACLEM and DEECD for their support and to all participants for their involvement.