



January 23, 2008

5/2008

E-Language

AFESA COUNCIL HOLDS TWO DAYS OF MEETINGS

The Australian Federation of Ethnic Schools Associations (AFESA) Council met in Melbourne on January 18 & 19 2008.

The Executive met on Friday to examine current strategic directions in the languages area, the relationships between jurisdictions and AFESA member associations and the work being undertaken with other key stakeholders.

The Executive examined proposals for the future directions of Community Languages Australia over the next few years.

Community Languages Australia is seen as central to:

- *Ensuring national coordination and quality assurance process for over 100 000 students, in excess of 1000 schools and for the 8 AFESA member associations.*
- *Liaison with jurisdictions,*
- *Setting paths for improved teaching and learning,*
- *Rationalizing and sharing of resources,*
- *Raising awareness the community languages sector,*
- *articulating the role of this sector in delivering education and multicultural policies in jurisdictions and*
- *Ensuring national representation*

amongst other activities and roles.

An extensive report was presented on the **National Languages Seminar** held in Melbourne in November of 2007. The information, summation and general feelings about the Seminar discussion and outcomes were the central topic of both Executive and Council meetings.

AFESA stands by the position that a holistic approach to languages is required with all languages having a role and place in Australian Schools' Curriculum.

There are a range of reasons why languages should be maintained and the liaison and planning for their overall delivery is critical.

AFESA acknowledges there are various ways of categorizing languages –

- Priority languages
- Languages for development
- Community languages

However they all have a role and should continue to form the overall provision and delivery of languages education programs in Australia.

ALL LANGUAGES HAVE A PURPOSE AND SHOULD BE PROMOTED.

The effective delivery of languages education in all settings is very much reliant on

- a) *Strong Government commitment*
- b) *Strong commitment from schools – Principals, School Councils. Teachers, Parents*
- c) *Enthusiasm of those learning the language and the motivation they are given*
- d) *Supply and quality of teachers*
- e) *Strong Curriculum*
- f) *Resources*
- g) *Strong learning environment*
- h) *Pathways*
- i) *Promotion and awareness raising*
- j) *Support of business and industry*

No doubt there are many more reasons.

The AFESA Council believes Australia should not head up the path of focusing only on a few languages at the cost of others.

How we deliver the best programs is very much about how committed we are to the area.

The AFESA Council in its deliberations resolved the following:

- Ensure the DEST funded Improvement of National Coordination and Quality in Ethnic Schools Project targets and outcomes are met
- In 2008 undertake a major awareness raising program about the effective work of community languages schools, their role in the delivery of languages and multicultural education
- Develop the process for defining and accepting the area of community languages schools as a sector
- Core Funding campaign for the National Secretariat
- Promotion of a National Accord – Statement of Commitment on Community Languages Schools in all jurisdictions
As part of this project it was resolved to request the Department of Education and Children's Services in SA to consider sharing their recently signed Statement of Commitment with other jurisdictions
- National Conference to be held on Perth on October 6, 2008
- HREOC funded - Community Languages Schools Human Rights and Campaign Project – A joint HREOC and Community Languages Australia project .It was resolved to
 - Form a Muslim Reference Group and
 - Project Advisory Group to guide this major project.Dr Teresa Ventura will Project manage the curriculum development aspect of the project.
- An Executive Officers' Forum to be held in April 2008
- The Community Languages Australian Website URL will be shortened to www.cla.org.au instead of www.communitylanguagesaustralia.org.au
- International Year of Languages- State and Territory Associations were encouraged to promote languages education throughout 2008.
- Meetings in the Northern Territory in the first quarter of 2008
- Implementation of the Quality Assurance Frameworks and Trials in States and Territories
- Meeting of Program Advisory Group (PAG) of the National Project on March 3, 2008 in Adelaide
- Meeting with MCEETYA Working Party in Adelaide on March 3, 2008.
The AFESA Council sees this as an important occasion as it provides the opportunity to report on community languages schools issues and hear from jurisdictions about issues, plans and concerns.
- Community Languages Australia initiate discussions in some quarters to clarify funding issues

Member Associations provided detailed reports about their activities, their work and position of languages education in their jurisdiction.

From these reports for the last quarter of 2007 it was evident that there was extensive activity and much planning has gone into 2008.

It was pleasing to hear that the work undertaken by community languages schools is ensuring positive outcomes in schools and activity is of a high standard.

A concern raised by a number of Associations related to funding.

It was resolved that Community Languages Australia initiate discussions in some quarters to clarify funding issues.

Member Associations also shared information which is another important aspect of the Community Languages Australia work.

The next AFESA Council meeting will be held in April 2008