



Where language and culture come together

COMMUNITY LANGUAGES AUSTRALIA

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E-Language

INTERNATIONAL MOTHER LANGUAGE DAY - FEBRUARY 21

THANK YOU COMMUNITY LANGUAGES SCHOOLS

Have you thought about how important languages education is to your community and to Australia? Community languages schools play an important role in nurturing, maintaining developing mother tongue languages?

February 21, International Mother Language day is probably a good time to stop and seek answers to these questions. It is time to recognise the efforts of all who are associated with this area.

Most importantly it is time to recognise those who have contributed so much over the years to ensure community languages schools in Australia are held in high regard.

International Mother Language Day was proclaimed by UNESCO's General Conference in November 1999. The International Day has been observed each year since February 2000 to promote linguistic and cultural diversity and multilingualism.

Languages are the most powerful instruments of preserving and developing our tangible and intangible heritage. All moves to promote the dissemination of mother tongues will serve not only to encourage linguistic diversity and multilingual education but also to develop fuller awareness of linguistic and cultural traditions throughout the world and to inspire solidarity based on understanding, tolerance and dialogue.

These are official statements from UNESCO which should give encouragement to community languages school students, teachers, parents and community leaders.

On this day we also recognise the efforts of those who have worked so hard to ensure community languages schools have provided and continue to provide students with opportunities to learn, maintain and appreciate their language and culture.

International Mother Language day is a day to reflect on why we have these schools, how much they contributed individual communities, to families and most importantly to students themselves.

These schools also contribute to social cohesion. In Australia we have over 100 000 students, studying 69 languages. The total connection in anyone week is in excess of 500 000 people, who are associated with community languages schools.

This is an opportunity to share our languages and our cultural experiences. We help each other grow, we get to know each other better, we understand each other and we form a solid base of socially responsible citizens.

Those who are privileged to have another language, who understand and appreciate their culture are a valuable asset to Australia. This is a great bank of knowledge, and a great resource - socially economically, culturally or educationally.

So, as you as a student, teacher or administrator head out to your classes each week consider what a wonderful opportunity we have to learn, to teach and to support mother tongue languages education.

On this day we say thank you to all who are associated with community languages education. You are a credit to your own community, and a credit to Australia!

We wish you well in your endeavours

2010, International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures