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## Bi-lingual resources launched for teaching human rights

A set of human rights education resources in two languages were launched by Australian Race Discrimination Commissioner, Graeme Innes, at the Victorian Community Languages Schools Conference, *Home of language, culture and social inclusion* in Melbourne today.

*Being me: Knowing you* are resources that aim to foster understanding about the practical meaning and importance of human rights in our everyday lives. The resources, which were developed through a partnership between the Australian Human Rights Commission and Community Languages Australia, emphasize the inherent values of bilingualism and linguistic diversity.

“The truly unique aspect of these resources is that they are able to reach a broad audience, including communities with limited English skills who will be able to increase their awareness of human rights issues in their own family language,” said Commissioner Innes. “They are intended to assist students and others to think about the effect their words and actions may have on those around them, as well as to encourage them to be respectful of their classmates’ differences and to support learning about what to do when these differences are not respected.”

The resources take the form of a teacher’s manual, resource leader handbook, student handbook and parent guide, all of which are available in Arabic and in translation-ready English. Commissioner Innes encouraged other community language schools to translate the resources and to incorporate them into their curriculums.

“*Being Me: Knowing you* are resources that strive to deeply embed an understanding about rights, respect and responsibilities within the Australian community, including hard-to-reach audiences, by enabling these issues to be taken into the home and discussed around the kitchen table,” Commissioner Innes said.

Commissioner Innes said that the value of family language, or second language competencies, in education should not be underestimated when striving to achieve successful learning outcomes.

“Language skills improve our ability to communicate with sensitivity and with cultural intelligence,” said Commissioner Innes. “Language is so important in education because it captures and conveys cultural meaning, it is a critical aspect of cultural heritage and it uniquely communicates thinking.”

“Education is a very important tool - it is what makes this resource important,” said Stefan Romaniw, Executive Director of Community Languages Australia. “In order to ensure strong community cohesion, all communities must have access to information about their rights, about respect and about tolerance.”

Mr Romaniw said that over 60 communities will have access to this resource and over 40 of them came together today, representing a mosaic of Australia.

Two-day professional development workshops, which will provide instruction in delivery of the resources, will soon be run in each state and territory. The resources are available on the Australian Human Rights Commission website at: [www.humanrights.gov.au/education/being\\_me\\_knowing\\_you/](http://www.humanrights.gov.au/education/being_me_knowing_you/)

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