



Where language and culture come together

COMMUNITY LANGUAGES AUSTRALIA

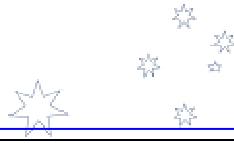
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MEDIA RELEASE

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WESTERN AUSTRALIA LAUNCHES PROFESSIONAL LEARNING PROGRAM FOR WA COMMUNITY LANGUAGE SCHOOLS

Community language schools in Western Australia were presented with a new and vibrant professional learning and development program on Thursday May 28, 2015.

The launch was attended by many Western Australian community leaders, community language school teachers and coordinators, government officials and Ethnic Schools Associations of WA (ESAWA) representatives.

The Western Australian (WA) Minister and Citizenship for Multicultural Interests, The Hon Mike Nahan MLA launched the program and highlighted the important role community language schools play in language and cultural maintenance. He focused on the support the WA Government was providing and will continue to provide through the Office of Multicultural Interests (OMI).

The Minister also indicated the need for more languages to be offered at years 11 and 12 and that community language schools should put their hands up to be providers. The WA is committed to supporting schools through funding programs.

The OMI headed by Rebecca Ball has initiated an expanded professional learning and development program for community language school teachers and instructors.

Community Languages Australia /Australian Federation of Ethnic Schools Associations will be working with OMI in delivering the program in the following areas:

1. *A workshop program consisting of the delivery of 10 sessions on relevant PD topics based on local interest and demand including a program for parents – Raising children bilingually*
2. *10 bursaries for WA based community language schools to attend CLA conferences*
3. *Development and hosting of a website for community language schools in WA*
4. *Modification and fitting for purpose an accreditation database to enable registration, monitoring, reporting and evaluation of WA Community Languages Schools (CLS's)*
5. *Provision of recommendations/ references to contribute to development of a WA resource library. OMI will establish and house the resource library.*
6. *Administration and advisory support from CLA for WA community language school*

OMI has provided CLA - AFESA funding to undertake the above. CLA looks forward to working with OMI and community language schools in supporting professional learning. CLA - Executive Director, Stefan Romaniw who attended the launch called on all schools to continue their committed work and to strive for excellence through delivering quality programs.

“We will work together in providing teachers and instructors with tools to enhance teaching and learning. There are many challenges before us, but collectively we will continue to meet them because we all believe in providing our children the best opportunities to learn and maintain their language and culture,” Mr Romaniw said.

CLA – AFESA will also work with the Ethnic Schools Associations in WA (ESAWA) in enhancing its strategic activity. Mr Romaniw called on community language schools in WA to join and support ESAWA.

At the launch John Aciek, President of the Dinka Association spoke about the importance of community language schools in emerging communities to maintain language and culture. He gave a very articulate background presentation to the challenges that the communities face. His passionate presentation gave great insight. He also highlighted how together – the many communities make up Australia.

Kathleen Lazairdis, Coordinator of the Macedonian Language School in WA gave an informed history of how the school started, how it has had to refocus to meet needs of students today and how the community works hard to maintain language and culture in the Australian context.

Both presentations came from different perspectives, but highlighted the efforts of communities and the commitment needed to support community language schools.

Another highlight of the evening was the *performance of the Perth Sinhala School* whose motto is *We love Sri Lanka, its culture and the Sinhalese language*. A very polished and entertaining performance by young Australians of Sri Lankan background.

The launch showed strong support for schools. The program will build on previous workshops and programs and provide community language schools with an opportunity to share and learn from each other.

“Community language schools not only provide opportunities to learn and maintain language and culture, but a wonderful example of social cohesion and harmony with many communities coming together as one to build another vital asset for Australia,” Mr Romaniw said.

Links PD Program <http://www.omi.wa.gov.au/resources/publications/languages/plp.pdf>
Dinka community presentation; <http://www.communitylanguagesaustralia.org.au>
Minister Nahan’s Release
<http://www.mediastatements.wa.gov.au/Pages/StatementDetails.aspx?listName=StatementsBarnett&StatId=9553>
Further information about program : <http://www.omi.wa.gov.au/index.cfm>

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