

Media Release

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SBS encourages kids to celebrate language with national competition

SBS has partnered with Community Languages Australia (CLA) to launch the inaugural SBS National Languages Competition from 20 June to 29 July. The exciting new initiative aims to encourage and celebrate a love of learning languages in Australia.

Nearly one in five Australians speak a language other than English at home*, yet rates of language learning are on the decline. With more than 300 languages spoken, the SBS National Languages Competition hopes to inspire young Australians to explore and embrace what it is to be an Australian in all our diversity and contribute to the retention and continuing development of language learning.

The theme for the 2016 SBS National Languages Competition is 'What does learning language mean to you?' CLA students aged four to seven are encouraged to draw a picture that illustrates what learning another language means to them, while the secondary primary and senior categories are to write their responses in language.

The top 72 entries from across the country will be presented on the SBS National Languages Competition website and 24 of those will be eligible for the People's Choice Award voted by the public from 30 August to 9 September. Six lucky winners will be flown to the SBS National Languages Competition Presentation Ceremony in Sydney on Saturday 8 October to accept their award.

The competition is open to all CLA students in Australia aged four to 18. CLA is an umbrella body that unites over 1,000 community language schools, providing language maintenance in 69 languages to in excess of 100,000 school age children.

SBS Director of Audio and Language Content Mandi Wicks said:

"As the world's most multicultural and multilingual broadcaster, SBS Radio is proud to launch this fantastic initiative to contribute to the social inclusion and cross-cultural understanding of young Australians - linguistically, sociologically and culturally. It comes from the heart of SBS and speaks to our purpose of inspiring Australians to explore and celebrate diversity."

Executive Director of CLA Stefan Romaniw OAM said:

"CLA is excited to partner with SBS to reinforce the importance of language education, cultural maintenance and social harmony. The initiative encourages students, parents and the community to focus on the importance of learning a language. Community language schools are one of the many tools used to consolidate Australia's identity as a truly multicultural society – a society concerned with embracing and celebrating an infinite spectrum of diversity in backgrounds, histories and heritages amongst our citizens, and in allowing the possibilities that they bring from across the ocean to thrive and flourish in an atmosphere that values tolerance and acceptance."

For more information, go to sbs.com.au/nlc

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*Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics 2011 Census of Population & Housing

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