



AUSTRALIAN FEDERATION OF ETHNIC SCHOOLS ASSOCIATIONS (inc)
Community Languages Australia
Where language and culture come together
189 Faraday Street Carlton, Victoria 3053

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MEDIA RELEASE

NATIONAL COMMUNITY LANGUAGE SCHOOLS CONFERENCE BEING HELD IN PERTH AN OVERWHELMING SUCCESS

The 2017 National Community Languages Schools Conference held in Perth on Saturday October 7, 2017 at the Community Catholic Education Centre, attracted over 200 participants from over 30 communities – a collage of language and cultural backgrounds.

The Conference Theme was - *Language Schools - Providing Quality Linguistic and Cultural Experience*
The thrust of the conference highlighted the valuing of community languages which, through their diversity and voice, continuing to enrich the well-being of our society, encouraging acceptance, care, participation, sharing and understanding.

The **Minister for Multicultural Affairs the Hon. Paul Papalia CSC MLA** officially opened the Conference and **The Hon. Sue Ellery MLC Minister for Education and Training** delivered a key note address at the Conference Dinner
Minister Papalia spoke passionately about the importance of languages and that the Government has strong commitment to languages education and the roles CLS play. He highlighted that there were a number of WA Members of Cabinet who come from various Indigenous and Multicultural backgrounds.
The Leader of the Opposition **The Hon Mike Nahan** also addressed the Conference.

Tasso Douvartzides Chair of AFESA welcomed all present on behalf and thanked them for their hard work and ongoing commitment .

Key note presenter Joe Lo Bianco really set the tone with an engaging presentation on the role of language equating to the ecology – In a pond there are many elements which rely on each other and keep it viable and calm. Once we tamper with it is disrupts the natural beauty. With language and education is the same once we start to tamper with the natural existence of languages, when we categorise them, only use some and not others we are also upsetting the natural rhythm of learning.
- **Dr Maria Gindidis** delivered an inspiring presentation on *Leadership in Community Languages Schools and the importance of allowing younger people to slot into leadership positions to be able to challenge at times longstanding practices*
A new element was introduced that is the connection with Indigenous Languages - **Sue Hanson** delivered a presentation *Preservation of Aboriginal Languages* -
Student voices were heard from *Love of Languages*: presenters – **Katerina Buck** (SBS 2016 National Student Competition Winner – Senior Category) and students from the **Perth Sinhala School**.

Members of **Consular Corps** – Italy, Japan, Germany spoke about cooperation between home land government and communities

Senior members of the Office of Multicultural Affairs were also in attendance and provided their support for this exciting and memorable day for community language schools in WA
Perth Sinhala School presented special guest performers from Sri Lanka at the conference and dinner

The Conference Dinner held at Pan Pacific Hotel was also a sell-out. A wonderful opportunity for communities to network. 20 teachers from Victoria attended the day and had the opportunity to meet with their counterpart schools in WA

The Hon. Sue Ellery MLC Minister for Education and Training delivered a key note the Conference Dinner. The Minister expressed strong support for languages and the community languages sector. She provided a commitment that her Department is keen you work with community languages school sector and offered her support. The Minister also expressed her thanks to ESAWA President Enzo Sirna for his support and mature approach in representing the community languages schools in WA

CLA Executive Director Stefan Romaniw presented The Record Card assessment of community languages schools in Australia and their importance of working in partnership. He also called on a shift in terminology which better reflects that role CLS play – from seeing them as complementary providers to having parity and being on par with other mainstream language school providers

““We were pleased to host this National conference of community languages schools. The overwhelming numbers show that community languages play a key role not only in our communities but as part of the education agenda in WA and nationally. Community languages, language provision in mainstream schools’ settings are a guarantee of community languages staying alive” **Mr Enzo Sirna AM** President of the Ethnic Schools Association of WA said today

“Our National and State Conferences this year have attracted more than 1000 participants from over 50 language groups. Our sector – Community language schools is constantly moving forward providing a great service to education, multicultural affairs, social cohesion and communities. Governments should recognise this” AFESA Chairman **Tassos Douvartzides** said

“This conference has made some ground making steps as we move away from seeing community languages schools are complementary providers and being recognised as a major provider language education in Australia”
The community languages school sector is in providing an invaluable resource to Australian education’
Stefan Romaniw OAM Executive Director of Community Languages Australia said

Enzo Sirna President ESAWA ably handled the MC role on the day as well coordinating the overall program

Australian of Federation of Ethnic Associations (AFESA) -Community Languages Australia also its quarterly Council meeting in Perth and representatives from States and Territories on Friday October 6, 2017

The Conference was organised by the Ethnic Schools Association of WA in cooperation with Australian of Federation of Ethnic Associations (AFESA) -Community Languages Australia
The NSW Federation of Ethnic Schools Association held its State conference at the University of Sydney on October 7, 2017
Over 600 participants attended. A wonderful achievement .