



Where language and culture come together



## COMMUNITY LANGUAGES AUSTRALIA

Where language and culture come together

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## MEDIA RELEASE

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For Immediate release

### **Baillieu Government Ministers reinforce commitment to languages education in Victoria**

*"We are many but we are one,"*

Victorian Minister for Education Martin Dixon and Minister for Multicultural Affairs and Citizenship Nicholas Kotsiras met with over 150 community languages schools representatives from over 30 communities last night at Richmond Town Hall and reinforced the Baillieu Government's commitment to languages education and to community languages schools.

Color, excitement, students in national costumes, musicians and a strong sense of unity filled the air. "We are many but we are one," was the paramount sentiment, which flowed from the conversations with the Ministers.

The meet and greet event was a perfect opportunity for community language school representatives to meet with both Ministers and discuss various issues in an informal setting.

Minister Dixon in his address highlighted the important role of languages in education and complimented those working in the community language schools for their dedication and commitment. He reinforced the message that the Baillieu Government has strong commitment to languages education and the Government is committed to increase per capita funding for community languages schools to \$190.

Minister Kotsiras spoke about his personal involvement in the languages area. He highlighted the fact that the focus of attention must be on students and that our commitment has to be to give our students quality education programs and every opportunity to study a language in an effective way. A partnership by all stakeholders is required.

Stefan Romaniw Executive Director of Community Languages Australia welcomed the Ministers, congratulated them on their election and thanked them for the Government's commitment. He provided a short overview of the activities undertaken in 2010 and the plans for 2011 in the community languages school sector. He expressed thanks to the Department of Education Early Childhood Development (DEECD) for their commitment and support.

Tassos Douvartzides Chairmen of AFESA thanked the Ministers for their involvement and acknowledged the hard work undertaken by community languages schools teachers, parents and communities.

Students presented both Ministers with a set of printed works of refugee artists who participated in an Exhibition called *The New Heartland*, which was initiated and supported by AMES and Multicultural Arts Victoria.

"This was a true gathering of a mini united nations. The commitment shown by both Ministers and the enthusiasm expressed by all who attended is certainly a recipe for an exciting ride in the languages area over coming years," Mr Romaniw said.

There are over 34 000 students learning languages in community languages schools in Victoria in 42 languages. Community languages schools have the strongest retention rates of students completing VCE and have strong VCE results. There are over 110000 students nationally studying in a range of 69 languages.

For further information contact Stefan Romaniw 0419 531 255.

Link to function in Richmond February 2011 -

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/60161430@N08/>