



October 9, 2006

57/2006

E-Language

4th NATIONAL COMMUNITY LANGUAGES SCHOOLS - ETHNIC SCHOOLS CONFERENCE SAYS

“Australia can’t afford to be monolingual?”

Australia cannot afford to be monolingual! That was the overwhelming resolution from presenters and participants at the successful 4th National Community Languages Schools /Ethnic Schooling Conference held on Saturday October 7, 2006 at Carlton Crest in Brisbane.

Strong presentations from both Commonwealth and Queensland State Government representatives in support of languages were well received. They highlighted the important work undertaken by community languages schools in teaching languages and maintaining culture. It was pointed out this work positions Australia well internationally. Officially opening the Conference, Senator Russell Trood representing The Minister for Education, The Hon Julie Bishop and The Parliamentary Secretary for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs Andrew Robb MP spoke in depth about the importance of languages to Australia, the importance of strong citizenship programs and the contribution of the Commonwealth Government through the Department of Education Science and Training (DEST) in supporting languages.

Steve Maguire Executive Director of Multicultural Queensland representing the Queensland Government provided an analytical presentation about positioning Australia globally and the importance of language and culture and how the Queensland Government is supporting these areas.

As part of the opening, Narendra Nand, President of the Ethnic Schools Association of Queensland (ESAQ) provided insight into the work of ESAQ and its partnership with Department of Education through the LOTE Centre in Queensland and Multicultural Queensland.

Tassos Douvartzides AFESA Chairman gave a thought provoking and moving welcome. He used his own situation to show the importance of migration, citizenship and the valuable contribution made by those that settle.

Community Languages Australia, Executive Director Stefan Romaniw presented the *Statement by Community Languages Australia Community Language schools contributing to Quality Languages Education*: highlighting the importance community languages schools play in languages education in Australia. The Statement articulates the purpose, role and significance of the community languages schools sector in relation to the National Languages Statement and Plan 2005-2008 accepted by MCEETYA. The draft Organizational and Procedures Manual for Community Languages Schools was also presented.

The key note address “National Developments in Languages Education” delivered by Lia Tedesco, President Australian Federation Modern Languages Teachers Association provided a strong background to the Conference program and placed the work of community languages schools in context nationally, giving an overview of languages

education policy in Australia at this time. The facts and statistics showed the importance of languages education programs and the contribution of community languages schools in delivering these programs.

Ms Tedesco's presentation matched with the presentation from Dr Bob Carbines from Erebus International, who gave an overview of the Quality Assurance Program being undertaken, set the scene for strong workshops and overall future direction in work nationally. All presenters referred to the importance of the DEST funded Project – *Improvement to National Coordination and Quality Assurance in Ethnic Schools*.

An open forum panel chaired by Enzo Sirna AFESA Deputy Chair from WA at which Sue Buckle NSW DE&T, John Kiosoglou MBE Chairman of the Ethnic Schools Board in SA and Dr Bob Carbines spoke about the future direction of community language schools in Australia. Many scenarios were provided. They built roadmaps, outlined opportunities and challenges and provided advice. The open forum was continued in the final plenary session, at which issues of regional delivery were discussed together with importance of ongoing national coordination, support for the Organizational and Procedures manual – Overwhelming support for the National Community Languages Statement.

The afternoon workshops were as follows:

Sample Module of Communicative, Outcomes based approach to learning – Module 1 - 'I'm an Individual' –

Presenter: Madonna Baraclough, Classroom teacher of Chinese

Aligning Curriculum, Pedagogy and Assessment –

Presenter: Jane Kelly Queensland LOTE Centre

Language Activities for younger students

Presenter Jacqui Von Wersch

Professional Development Officer Ethnic Schools South Australia

Quality Assurance Framework Queensland Working party

Presenter Dr. Bob Carbines Erebus International

Intercultural Language Learning

Presenter: Eileen Siboulet Senior Education Officer

Queensland LOTE Centre.

Families Get to Know their Medicines –

Presenters: Doris Kordes - Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia, Jenny Davis - National Prescribing Service and Barbara Downie - Queensland LOTE Centre.

Emerging Communities Round table – Needs, Processes and Assistance

Presenter: Teresa De Fazio Victoria University

Morning and lunchtime entertainment was provided by – Participants' applause for the musical interludes certainly gave the performers encouragement as they were high class performances.

The Conference brought together teachers, instructors, jurisdictional representatives from around Australia. There is now doubt that the sector is continuing to grow, to provide direction, seeking better educational outcomes and strengthening the communities that provide the nearly 80 languages delivered through the program nationally.

On Friday evening the mood for the Conference was set via a Cocktail party hosted by National Prescribing Service and FECCA to meet with the AFESA Council and ESAQ members. Currently all parties are involved in a National Project - *Quality Use of Medicines* being trialed out in Queensland and will be rolled out nationally.

Acting FECCA Director Sharon Ride and NPS representative Hannah Baird and Community Languages Australia Executive Director Stefan Romaniw highlighted the importance of the partnership and how we build on each others strengths.

“We have come a long way in this partnership since Jennifer Davis and Doris Kordes addressed the AFESA Council meeting in January this year. We now have an effective partnership and the making of strong educational program’ Mr. Romaniw said.

The warm atmosphere, the friendships, but most importantly the focus of all to provide quality education to our students set the scene for the following day.

Community Languages Australia – AFESA Council extend its thanks to all presenters, participants, especially those that traveled from other States and Territories, sponsors for making Friday and Saturday – the 4th National Community Languages Schools-Ethnic Schooling Conference a great success and taking a further another step in strengthening languages education and cultural maintenance in Australia.

Special thanks go to Narendra Nand, Kelly Timmons and all the ESAQ Executive for their organization and to ESAQ members of their hospitality

See you in 2007 in ACT!

Photos of the event will be on our website

www.communitylanguagesaustralia.org.au

Presentations will also be posted shortly on this site
