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## E-Language

### 2006 POSITIVE YEAR IN CONSOLIDATING COMMUNITY LANGUAGES SCHOOLS SECTOR IN AUSTRALIA AFESA COUNCIL MEETING REVIEWS ITS ACTIVITY

2006 has been a year of consolidation and crystallisation of direction and positioning for Community Languages Australia and community languages schools in Australia.

Being identified as a partner in the 2005- 2008 *National Statement and National Plan for Languages Education* signed off by MCEETYA was recognized as central to the future development of the sector.

These were some of the outcomes and findings at the final meeting for 2006 of the Australian Federation of Ethnic Schools Associations (AFESA) Council which met in Melbourne on Saturday December 9, 2006.

The Council also endorsed the final drafts of a number of documents that are the outcome of work in the *Improvement of National Coordination and Quality Assurance in Ethnic Schools Project*, funded by the Commonwealth Department of Education Science and Training (DEST).

- ❖ The Community Languages Schools Statement by Community Languages Australia
- ❖ The Organizational and Procedures Manual
- ❖ The Report and Implementation Guidelines on Quality Assurance Framework

were all endorsed in their final draft form.

These will be driving documents in 2007 as the Council announced the 2007 Program of Professional Development which include–

- ❖ The introduction of the QA Frameworks at individual school level,
- ❖ State and Territory PD to workshop these documents and
- ❖ Round Tables in all Jurisdictions with key Stakeholders.

The Council is committed to bringing these documents to all jurisdictions to assist in raising awareness and also proposing that framework be part of the jurisdictional accreditation processes.

#### ***Council endorsed its vision and recommendations for the National Secretariat***

- ❖ its proposed funding model and
- ❖ role

which is to be presented as part of the final report for 2006 to DEST

#### ***Other identified positives for the year were:***

- ❖ 4<sup>th</sup> National Conference held in Queensland in October
- ❖ Quality Use of Medicine Program (Partnership between NPS, FECCA AND CLA) which will be piloted in Term 2 in 2007 in Queensland
- ❖ Teacher Training and PD Programs funded by the Victorian Department of Education and Training(DET)
- ❖ Quality Assurance Framework working parties facilitated by Erebus International
- ❖ Raising Children Bilingually and other PD sessions held around the country

Reports received from Members Associations at the meeting showed the high level of activity around the nation in community languages schools sector. The Council emphasized the importance of the National Coordination in increasing activity, awareness and improved programs.

***The Council also examined the overall outcomes of work this year under the project which are to be included in Project's Final Report for 2006 DEST :-***

- ❖ The ethnic schools / community languages schools sector is now an entrenched sector of languages education in Australia which has effective and measurable coordination structures in place nationally
- ❖ The sector has introduced a Quality Assurance Framework that provides it with measurable criteria open to external scrutiny. Erebus International has now provided a refined and quality document that will guide implementation
- ❖ Reasonable levels of communication and coordination are now visible with all jurisdictions
- ❖ The National Project has improved national coordination and communication between key stakeholders
- ❖ The Community Languages Australia website has proven to be a strong conduit and source of information
- ❖ Communities Languages Schools are represented on relevant bodies in each jurisdiction
- ❖ The awareness of the work of community languages school has been heightened
- ❖ Policy has been developed to strengthen linguistic and cultural diversity in Australia
- ❖ The implementation of the Quality Assurance Framework is central to the future of quality programs, will require additional funding and is a long term project
- ❖ Training and Professional Development has improved the quality of teaching and learning
- ❖ There is a national focus and plan for the future direction of Teacher Training in Community languages schools sector
- ❖ Enhanced networks have provided stronger outcomes in the teaching and learning areas
- ❖ Guidance and advice will be afforded to schools through the development and distribution of the Organizational and Procedures Manual
- ❖ Work throughout 2006 has established the long term direction for coordination of community languages schools sector in Australia by:-
- ❖ The National Secretariat will take a national leadership role in:
  - National Coordination and promotion
  - Quality Assurance
  - Professional Learning and Development
  - Data Collection and Reporting
  - Implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the National Statement and Plan implementation strategy
- ❖ The national survey and data collection will assist in planning for long term delivery
- ❖ An emerging communities position paper on needs has been developed
- ❖ Community languages Australia has responded to the Strands of the National Plan

- ❖ A plan for collaboration between jurisdictions in areas of resources and material development teacher training and professional development has been developed
- ❖ National language specific networks have been formed
- ❖ Opportunity to provide jurisdictions with a model of QA for accrediting and registration which will enhance the flexibility of delivering programs through community languages schools.

***Other issues discussed at the meeting were:***

- ❖ Outcomes of the National Survey  
This is first time national data collection has occurred in the sector. General data has now been collected and this will form the basis for a more refined survey in 2007
- ❖ Emerging communities – Research and Action Plan
- ❖ Harmony Day 2007
- ❖ 5<sup>th</sup> National Community languages School Conference to be held in 2007 in ACT
- ❖ Report on Consultation with Jenny Wilkinson – ACER *as part of* DEST funded project *Review of Education for Language Teachers*
- ❖ Fully Audited Financial Statements of AFESA accounts which include funding projects from DEST and DE&T Victoria were presented

***The meeting also had a formal consultation with*** Tim Curnow and Jim Dellit from South Australia as part of their DEST funded project - *An investigation into the state and nature of languages education in Australian schooling*

There was a robust discussion which highlighted the need for stronger overall commitment to languages education, the need for all providers to work collaboratively in delivering the Strands of the National Plan.

The Council acknowledged the strong support and funding of DEST. The strong working relationship and openness with our responsible officer at DEST Judy Gordon together with Managers Noel Simpson and Alison Sewell were highlighted as a leading practice.

DE&T (Victoria) has also been very supportive in funding programs and in allowing Community Languages Australia to administer the training and PD program in Victoria. Again strong working relations in negotiating major funding programs with Wendy Morris, Carol Kelly, Tony Cook has provided for a sound product that delivered quality.

The cooperation of State and Territory Departments of Education and Training, Departments, Offices and Commissions in the Multicultural Affairs area is also appreciated. Close working relations with many key stakeholders was also acknowledged.

The next Council meeting will be held on Saturday January 20, 2007 in Canberra.

**Further information Contact Stefan Romaniw 0419 531255**

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