



Where language and culture come together



COMMUNITY LANGUAGES AUSTRALIA

Where language and culture come together

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Community languages schools key players in delivering Government education and multicultural education policies Message for NSW Conference, October 2012

Community languages schools play a major role in delivering Government policy nationally and on a State and Territory basis.

This fact is often overlooked in our discussions, negotiations and planning.

How many times have you heard the term *community languages schools are complementary providers*? What does it really mean?

Well it's pretty straight forward - community languages schools are part of the bigger picture in delivering programs nationally and in the NSW Education system .

Governments commit to languages education being offered to students at school .

Governments commit to promoting awareness, acceptance, calling for harmony and social cohesion as part of a multicultural education program.

In NSW over 30,000 students are engaged in doing exactly this every week. In actual fact over 600 000 students, parents, teachers community members have some connection with community languages schools every week.

They are aligned with learning a language, they are living examples of diversity and the sector is *harmony in action*.

Through community languages schools we '*walk the talk*' we act, we give students, parents and the community the opportunity to foster their mother tongue. We give students, teachers parents and communities opportunities to come together to show strength in numbers and promote diversity. The community languages schools sector shows how over 40 different communities can come together and be living examples of social harmony.

Nationally over 110 000 students from 69 language groups make up this important area of education.

Because it's in our face, so to speak, we often overlook it and undervalue the work schools do and underestimate the impact we have on society.

Governments set themselves Key Performed Indicators.(KPI)

If one of these KPI's is **Increase the number of students studying a language -**

We have done it.



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If another KPI is ; **Show practical implementation of social harmony programs -**

We have done it and continue to it

Community languages schools have again assisted in meeting these KPI's.

However with all this comes responsibility.

Community languages schools must deliver a quality program.

Community Languages Australia has developed a Quality Assurance Frame work which

includes; *Leadership and Governance* Family participation, *Curriculum* Education
community links *Purposeful learning* Student wellbeing *Monitoring and*
evaluation Teaching practices

Schools need to be across this framework. Being part of the big picture in education demands that school administrators, leadership, staff and students understand how important this is.

Community Languages Australia encourages all our schools to include this Framework as part of everyday life in community languages schools.

Governments, parents and staff want quality programs, worthwhile and rewarding experiences that lead to not only proficiency in the language but also an appreciation of the language and culture and appreciation of others and their language and culture.

Through this and the interaction with others we grow as a school, we grow as community, and we grow in delivering Government language and multicultural education programs.

We should aspire to high ideals and programs to keep our communities alive . Don't look for the lowest common denominator, but strive for success and quality.

We all want to ensure that our students receive the best education.

Government also wants to ensure that there are quality programs. They want to ensure that the funds they provide are used well.

Government want to say the community languages school sector lives up to all expaetaiosna nd we most comfortable providing funding and support because ether are assisting us.

So what are the next steps? How do we improve quality and better learning outcomes?

Each school needs to provide an answer to this that will align itself with self improvement and reaching better student outcomes.

Will your school take the next step? I hope so !

Stefan Romaniw OAM , Executive Director , Community Languages Australia