



ISSUE

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ACT Ethnic School Association

Many Languages One Voice

MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT



On behalf of the Executive Committee members, I take this opportunity to thank our 43 Ethnic School members for the honour and privilege of serving over this year.

It has been a very fruitful and wonderful time for the ACT Ethnic Schools Association.

So much has been achieved over the this year and I know I speak on behalf of my colleagues, Vice President Raewyn Bastion, Vice President Maria Frketic, Secretary Santosh Gupta, Treasure Loan Pham, and Committee Members, Tiemin Tim Wu, Fuxin Li, Juanita Brown, Matelita Koloj, Peter Pan, Thangarajah Vadivelu, and Admin Officer Teclu Ogbamicael. I thank whole team for all their amazing work.

I have never met a more committed team like this who believe passionately in their work and the Committee is inspired by the dedication in serving our Ethnic Schools.

During this year we held two important events. One was the Annual Dinner on 23 August 2008, which was held at the University of Canberra. On this occasion, approximately 105 people attended and special guests included, Mr John Hargreaves MLA, Minister of Multicultural Affairs, Mr Gary Humphries, Senator for the ACT, Mr Zed Seselja MLA, Opposition Leader, Professor Stephen Parker, Vice Chancellor University of Canberra and Mr Tassos Douvartzides, Chairman of Australian Federation of Ethnic Schools Association.

Our second event was held on 28 September 2008, when we celebrated the ACT Ethnic Schools Open Day providing the 38 member schools with the occasion to share their experiences and achievements with each other and the wider community. Information regarding language tuition and venues in the ACT was also made available, courtesy of a number of community groups and associations.

The Ethnic Schools have made a significant and ongoing contribution to multiculturalism in Canberra by nurturing the many different languages (mother tongues of many) spoken in the community, and in so doing maintained our diverse cultural heritage.

The Open Day commenced at 10.00am and concluded at 5.00 pm and was officially opened at 1.30pm by Mr John Hargreaves, MLA, Minister for Multicultural Affairs.

We have had three workshops and teacher training sessions so far this year, and hope to continue next year. The feed back from the schools was extremely positive and everyone seemed to have really enjoyed and benefited.

I thank all our Ethnic Schools for their support and look forward to what lies ahead for our wonderful committee.

Javad Mehr
President
ACT Ethnic Schools Association

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Editors

LOAN PHAM
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Quality Assurance Framework Workshops

1. The purpose of the workshops is to make teachers at ethnic schools more familiar with current language teaching methodology in Australia with a focus on ethnic school teachers' specific needs and interests.



- Keeping the culture alive
- Working with students of different ages and levels
- Planning our teaching
- Evaluating and developing materials

2. Based on the first workshop (23 July 2008) Dr Elke Stracke, Professor of Canberra University, together with the teachers present in this workshop, developed a (modular) plan with workshops to be offered on a continuous basis. This teacher training programme is as an ongoing process, not a singular event.

3. Suggested modules for workshops are (not necessarily in this order, but possibly):

- Learning (more) about language teaching methods and techniques used in the Australian context to increase motivation in the ethnic school context (Workshop 15 October 2008)



- Managing our classroom: How can we deal with 'difficult' students? (Workshop 19 November 2008)

- Exploring the use of the first language (L1) and the target language (L2) in the ethnic school context

- Developing strong and supportive relationships with parents in the ethnic school context

- Developing speaking skills

Learning Languages

Period of insurance: August 2008
Knowing more than one language is an important life skill for citizens of the 21st century, for several reasons.

Firstly, courtesy of the Internet, we now live in a global village. Opportunities for personal interaction with people with other languages and from other cultures are ever present. Not all of them speak English, and even for those that do, the ability to communicate in another language ensures the interaction will be richer, deeper, more meaningful and more satisfying.

Secondly, there is a broad range of evidence which indicates that competence in more than one language enhances cognitive ability across the academic spectrum, including mathematics, music and logical reasoning.

Thirdly, many ACT residents have family backgrounds in languages other than English. These language skills are often passed very imperfectly to the next generation, a circumstance which many children regret in later life.

The ACT Government has recognized the importance of languages by requiring all government primary schools to offer a language program by 2010. Moreover, languages will be distributed among primary schools in such a way that students will be able to continue that language in their secondary schooling, provid-

ing their primary school is a feeder school for their secondary school.

But what if you would like to learn a language other than the one offered in primary school, or the few in your secondary school? Or what if you would like extra classes?

Some 1600 ACT students are already learning another language at ACT ethnic schools. These schools, and there are 40 of them, meet mostly on weekends for a few hours, and provide instruction in language, culture and history. The languages that you can learn include: Arabic, Bengali, Cantonese, Chinese (Mandarin), Croatian, Finnish, Greek, German, Hebrew, Hindi, Italian, Korean, Macedonian, Maori, Japanese, Nepalese, Persian, Polish, Punjabi, Russian, Samoan, Serbian, Sinhalese, Spanish, Swedish, Tamil, Tongan, Ukrainian and Vietnamese.

If you or your child would like to learn more about learning languages at an ethnic school, contact the ACT Ethnic Schools Association on the Second Floor, 180 London Circuit, Civic; Tel: 6230 5191 or Email: actesa@inet.com.au

Public Liability Insurance

Period of insurance: August 2008 to August 2009

Covering: The Insured's legal liability to pay by way of compensation to third parties in respect of personal injury and/or Property Damage Happening during the Period of Insurance caused by an occurrence in connection with the Business of the Insured.

Limit of Liability : Public Liability = \$20,000,000 any one occurrence.

Excess: Property Damage & Bodily Injury \$1,000

Note: SPECIAL CLAUSE

APPLICABLE: As per Attached

1. Molestation Exclusion
2. Communicable Diseases Exclusion
3. Participation Exclusion

To obtain a copy of the insurance cover, please contact ACTESA Admin Officer on (02) 62305191

Annual Dinner 2008



What a wonderful night!

The 14th Annual Dinner of ACT Ethnic Schools Association was held at the Canberra University on 23 August 2008.



On behalf of the ACTESA Executive Committee Members, President Mr Javad Mehr, welcome the guests and other dignitaries. The night was hosted by Maria Frketic, Principal of the Croatian Ethnic School and Adrian Arul from the Canberra Tamil School. As usual our ethnic schools' Teachers, Principals and representatives attended the dinner. Guest speakers were Mr John Hargreaves, Minister for Multicultural Affairs; Mr Gary Humphries, Senator for the ACT; Opposition Leader Mr Zed Seselja; Professor Stephan Parker, Vice Chancellor of the University of Canberra; and Mr Tassos Douvartzids, Chairman of the Australian Federation of Ethnic Schools Association. All the guest speakers that night voiced their appreciation and support for the language program run by the ACT Ethnic Schools Association. Among the most prominent speeches of the night was the speech from Mr Douvartzids who urged the ACT Government to increase the funding for ACT Ethnic Schools to make the funding at par with the funding in other Australian States. Mr Douvartzids provided statistical evidence that ACT ethnic schools receive less funding than that in other Australian states. The great impact that these extra funds

will have on ethnic education in Canberra was also highlighted and in particular, in schools with staff who volunteer their time. Mr Douvartzids went on to urge us and those involved in ethnic education to lobby our government representatives in gaining those funds. He rightfully said that the longevity and quality of our language education depends on this funding and it is up to the ACT Government to focus on supporting us financially. We are pleased to report that ACT Government has provided some extra funds after the event for ethnic schools language program and we hope that this trend will continue.

The evening progressed with delicious food being served by the Canberra University Student Union members and we were entertained by the beautiful singing by Marina Kovac from the Croatian Ethnic School, dancing by the gorgeous ladies from the Spanish school and the joyful singing by the teachers from the Tongan school. We were also entertained by Adrian and other friends of the ACTESA singing & dancing, and Mr Hargreaves playing the guitar.

ACTESA would like to thank everyone who attended the Annual Dinner event, helped in organising the event, donated items for raffle prizes and last but not the least the Canberra University in particular Prof Stephen Parker and Dr Faiz Hussain for providing us the venue and other facilities.



The night finished off with the raffle prizes being drawn and further singing and dancing. All in all, the night can be summed up as being successful and entertaining with lots of laughter.

Maria Frketic,
Vice President, ACTESA

International Year of Languages 2008

The year 2008 was an important year for the ACTESA being the International Year of Languages. The United Nations General Assembly proclaimed the 2008 as the year of languages in an effort to promote unity in diversity, multilingualism, protecting & preserving diversity of languages and cultures, and global understanding. The International Mother Language Day celebrated every year on 21 February since 2000, marked the start of the International Year of Languages.

Australia is a multicultural society and more than 200 languages are spoken in the community other than the English which is Australia's national language. According to the office of the Parliament Secretary, there are more than 60 different languages spoken by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians other than the languages spoken by migrants who have settled in Australia over the years.

The celebration of the International Year of Languages reminds everyone of the importance of each language and recognises the principle of equality of all languages. The ACTESA and Canberra University jointly celebrated the International Year of Languages at the Canberra University along with the ACTESA's Open Day on 28 September 08. There were celebrations of the International Year of Languages everywhere including the Australian National University (ANU) and the Narrabundah College.

The ACTESA is the apex autonomous body in the ACT to look after the languages other than English. It has member schools from Arabic, Bangla, Chinese (Mandarin/Cantonese), Croatian, Finnish, German, Greek, Hebrew, Hindi, Italian, Japanese, Khmer, Korean, Maori, Macedonian, Mon, Persian, Polish, Punjabi, Russian, Samoa, Serbian, Sinhalese, Spanish, Swedish, Tamil, Tonga, Ukrainian and Vietnamese.

'The Australian Government recognises the importance of maintaining and supporting a diversity of languages and encourages all levels of government, community organisations and private business to adopt strategies to communicate with all Australians.

The Act Government Minister for Education & Training, speaking at Professional Learning Conference (Languages Matter!) on 21 February 2008 emphasized that by 2010 all public schools will offer a languages program to all students from year 3 to year 8. The Languages Education in Australia website (www.languageseducation.com) provides the information for every one whether you are a student, a parent, a principal or a teacher.

Santosh Gupta
Secretary
ACT Ethnic Schools Association

Travel Round the World in a day!

An ACT celebration of languages



Over 800 people got a taste of our multilingual local community on Sunday 28 September at the University of Canberra (UC). The day comprised a range of activities and displays which celebrated the many languages being spoken and learned in the Canberra region and marked the UN International Year of Languages.

Officially opened by Mr John Hargreaves, ACT Minister for Multicultural Affairs, the event incorporated the Ethnic Schools Open Day, an annual event which showcases the work of the more than 40 community-run schools teaching over 30 languages in the ACT. Children from these schools were the main stars of the musical and dance performances throughout the day, though adults had their turn with a spectacular Indonesian dance by UC students and the singing of an Italian choir.



Participants were able to visit more than 45 display stalls organised and staffed by local ethnic schools, other community groups teaching or promoting languages, and Canberra's diplomatic community. There were also free workshops, courtesy of several UC lecturers and students, embassy personnel, community members, and teachers, which allowed participants to learn about particular languages and writing systems, get practical ideas

about how to help develop language skills, and discuss the value of languages for life and work. We were especially pleased to have a workshop which introduced us to speaking Gamilaraay, an indigenous language of NSW.

Participants could record their journey around the world in specially designed Global Passports featuring 33 languages. Passport holders had to seek out native speakers of the languages at the various displays and workshops and show that they could say a few words in each language to have the relevant page stamped.



There were also three panel discussions. One was led by parents and their children from bilingual or trilingual families who shared their experiences and views on raising children in more than one language. The second panel comprised representatives from the major political parties standing at the October ACT election who discussed their party's policies on language education and what they hoped to achieve in this area if elected for the next term of government. The third panel was made up of four 'language champions' who told us how languages had added to their lives.

Feedback on the day was extremely positive and everyone seemed to have a really good time. It certainly brought together a diverse range of organisations, groups and individuals in the ACT who are involved in, or interested in, the teaching and learning of languages and cultures. It is hard to judge how successful it was in sparking more interest in languages in the general community however. We received little mainstream media coverage, and

publicity is certainly an area that needs more attention if such an event were to be repeated in the future. Also the number of activities at any one time, often up to 5 happening simultaneously, meant that some workshops were not as



well attended as they could have been if people had been able to attend all the workshops they were interested in.

Nevertheless many valuable new contacts and links were made which can be built on in the future. The commitments the politicians made during the language policy panel will also be followed up by members of the Canberra Region Languages Forum. In addition, the day was a great celebration of multicultural Canberra and the International Year of Languages. Special thanks to all those who gave so freely of their time and enthusiasm to make the day happen, and to the Canberra Multicultural Community Forum Inc (CMCF), the ACT Ethnic Schools Association, and the University of Canberra for their financial and in-kind support.

Mandy Scott

Christmas Party 2008

A Christmas party was organised on 1 December in Theo Notaras Building. The highlight of the party was sharing of ethnic foods. A number of schools brought their ethnic speciality food to share with others. Almost 100 teachers, principals and representatives from the member schools, and invitees attended the Christmas party. This marked the end of year 2008. ACTESA wished everyone a merry Christmas and a very happy New Year 2009.