



Where language and culture come together



## COMMUNITY LANGUAGES AUSTRALIA

*Where language and culture come together*

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### NEWS RELEASE

#### **VICTORIA'S CONSULAR CORPS SUPPORT LANGUAGES EDUCATION AND THE ARTS IN A MULTICULTURAL SOCIETY**

Victorian Government policies supporting diversity, languages education, community language schools and the arts and ways of cooperating with homeland governments were topics for vibrant discussion at a Round Table with Victoria's Consular Corp hosted by Community Languages Australia on June 19, 2013 at the Victorian Business and Investment Centre in Melbourne.

The purpose of the roundtable hosted by Community Languages Australia was to provide representatives of homeland governments with detailed information about Victoria's commitment to diversity, to languages education and the arts and to examine ways that partnerships could be enhanced or formed with homeland governments to support local communities.

Nicholas Kotsiras, Minister for Education and Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Citizenship, Energy and Resources addressed the forum outlining the Victorian Government's commitment to building strong local and international links and the importance of partnerships between the Victorian Government, community structures and homeland governments.

Roundtable facilitator and Executive Director of Community Languages Australia, Stefan Romaniw welcomed participants and outlined the expected outcomes of the forum : -

- A better understanding of programs that drive and support languages education, community languages schools, the arts and communities and
- seek directions on how homeland governments might support these by ways of practically engaging with programs and communities.

Mr Romaniw also presented the role and activities of community language schools and how they assist in implementing policy in areas of language education, social cohesion, engagement and the arts. He called on homeland governments to support local community languages schools.

Chris Thompson, Director of Priority Programs Department of Education & Early Childhood Development presented the *Victorian Government's Vision and Implementation Plan for Language Education 2013-2025*. Mr Thompson gave an informative presentation highlighting the Government's commitment in promoting language learning in Victoria. He also explained the reasons for the government making languages education a priority. The presentation was an excellent awareness raising presentation, which resulted in participants examining ways of cooperating.

Jill Morgan, CEO of Multicultural Arts Victoria highlighted how the arts supported the individual and communities. She also emphasised great opportunities to make language education learning fun by



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using the arts. She provided examples of how MAV has been successful in working with communities on local, national and international levels.

Following the presentations members of the consular corps engaged in very energetic, productive dialogue, which provided practical examples of possible cooperation and partnerships as well as already existing programs where homeland governments support programs in Victoria.

The outcome was that a list of all the suggestions would be compiled and distributed for consideration. Given the success of the forum it was proposed to consider conducting these forums more regularly as they are most helpful in providing and sharing information.

Tassos Douvartzides Chairman of AFESA offered a vote of thanks to all and called all present to work in partnership. He indicated there is great potential to enhance hands on, practical support and outcomes.

In conclusion Mr Romaniw called on all to make this a working forum with deliverable outcomes, which will form or enhance partnerships. He highlighted that all present carried the responsibility for supporting communities. In his capacity as Chair of the Australia Day Committee he also urged the consular corps to support their colleagues who are advocating enhanced participation in the 2014 Australian Day celebrations.

The Forum was successful as it highlighted paths for partnership and cooperation through languages education, community languages schools and the arts, where homeland governments can provide ideas, support and encouragement to members of their community and most importantly collectively make Victoria a better stronger, cohesive and progressive place to live in.