



NSW FEDERATION OF COMMUNITY LANGUAGE SCHOOLS
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Media Release

The NSW Federation of Community Language Schools hosted its 2014 Annual Dinner at the Cyprus Community Club on Saturday 28 June 2014.

The gala community event was attended by the Premier of NSW the Hon. Mike Baird MP and his wife Kerryn. Both were enthusiastically and warmly welcomed by the 430 attendees. It was the new Premier's first attendance at one of the Federation's events and he was pleasantly surprised by the size of the gathering.

Also in attendance were, Minister for Citizenship and Communities Victor Dominello, Linda Burney - Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Parliamentary Secretary David Clarke MLC, Maria Ficarra MLC, Community Relations Commission Chair Mr Vic Alhadeff, Stefan Romaniw from Community Languages Australia, Jozefa Sobski - Chair of the NSW Community Languages Schools Board, Cllr Rosana Tyler - Deputy Mayor of Marrickville along with Consular officials.

Premier Mike Baird gave a heart felt speech during which he said that

"Tonight we are celebrating many things. At the core, we are celebrating multiculturalism"

About multiculturalism he said *"it is fantastic for the human highways, for trade, for the transfer of ideas"*.

He added that *"multiculturalism is something we celebrate in terms of freedom it builds between countries such as freedom of speech... ..culture ...and. religion. We celebrate uniqueness but come together as one strong Australia"*.

Vilifying racial hatred and showing his support against 18C, Mr Baird said that *"language is important so "as we speak, we use it (language) for the positive, use it for the good"*. He also stated that *"in terms of our cultures, at the core is our language" and "celebrating those languages and learning those languages, that is what we celebrate tonight."*

He congratulated the Federation *"for bringing harmony across all cultures and all different languages."*

Finishing he said *"I look forward to being a friend of the Federation for many years to come"*

Minister Victor Dominello again took the time to make himself available to the communities of NSW. He spoke about the importance of community participation not only within their own communities but other mainstream community events and celebrations such as Anzac Day or Clean Up Australia for example.

Addressing in his speech all representatives of communities he said *"when I see you, I see my heritage; I see our future and that is a very powerful thing. Given your reach in our community you have a capacity, not only to shape our State but a power to frame our Nation."*

The Minister thanked the Federation for its collaboration by saying that *"the NSWFCLS has supported me unconditionally -for that I will never, ever forget you...You are part of my bigger family"*.

Regarding the theme "Remembering and Celebrating the ANZAC Spirit" in the short film and colour poster of the students' competition he said *"We need to focus on our social cohesiveness...things such as ANZAC Day"*. The Minister stated that he invited and encouraged the Community Language School organisations to *"lay a wreath on behalf of your school or visit your local RSL , particularly with the centenary of the ANZAC; see if you can engage with the local aboriginal community and get involved in that. Again, that is a social cohesive that brings us together, or simply volunteering..... Each of your schools can be involved".*
You shape who we are and who we will be"

The Community Relations Commission that is a major supporter of the Federation was represented by the Chair - Mr Vic Alhadeff who spoke about the importance of languages and the opposition of the communities to the proposed changes to the Federal Government's Section 18 C of the Commonwealth Racial Discrimination Act. The attendees represented 33 language groups from 62 schools and organisations. They were able to interact and network amongst their own other communities during the dinner. The evening also provided an opportunity to acknowledge the members of the community language school sector who are doing outstanding community work

As we are approaching a forthcoming NSW State election, the event gave the Federation and its membership an opportunity to lobby the guests about the importance of languages, language education and the role of community language schools in NSW.

The NSW Federation of Community Language Schools is a key multicultural event that enables the ethnic communities of NSW to highlight the positive impact that the community language schools sector is having on the state of NSW.

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