

# Community Language Schools

Australia's community language schools (also known as ethnic schools) have been in operation since 1857. They help Australia to consolidate its identity as a truly multicultural society – a society which embraces and celebrates a wide diversity of backgrounds, histories and heritages from all over the world and allows them to thrive and flourish in an atmosphere that values tolerance and acceptance.

## A brief introduction

- Community language schools are not for profit, after-hours institutions, open to students regardless of their linguistic backgrounds.
- They are complementary providers of languages education to mainstream schools in Australia. Their role is articulated in the National Languages Statement and National Languages Plan endorsed by the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA).
- Schools receive some funding from the Australian Government which is distributed by the States and Territories. Some States and Territories provide additional funding. Parents assist by paying fees and holding fund raising events to meet the additional costs of conducting classes.
- Each State and Territory regulates the registration, accreditation and funding processes. A community language school must be a legal and non-profit organisations to be eligible for funding.
- Each State and Territory and has its own Ethnic Schools/Community Languages Schools Association or Federation.
- Community Languages Australia (CLA) coordinates the activities of all State and Territory Ethnic Schools/Community Languages Schools Associations and Federations under the umbrella of the Australian Federation of Ethnic Schools, Associations Inc. (AFESA)

***About 1000 school authorities operate schools in over 60 community language in Australia, enrolling over 100,000 students from Prep to Year 12 each year.***

***In the ACT in 2013, there are more than 40 schools offering programs in or 30 community languages to over 1800 students from pre-school to Year 12***

## Roles and Functions

Community language schools

- engage children in the excitement of learning and developing skills in another language,
- encourage awareness of the benefits inherent in multiculturalism,
- help minimize alienation and marginalization of cultures within Australian society,
- contribute to cultural integration, an important facet of Australian life, by introducing our children to the adventure and rich diversity of the multicultural experience,
- help generate and maintain a sense of camaraderie and mutual respect within the broader Australian community,
- contribute to the fostering of communities, and the raising of their profiles, by establishing programs and activities which draw attention to our rich ethnic landscape

**Adapted from** <http://www.communitylanguagesaustralia.org.au/AboutUs.php>

**For information about community language schools in the ACT visit:**  
<http://www.actclsa.org.au/>