



**Australian Federation of Modern  
Language Teachers Associations Inc.**

## **NEWS IN BRIEF**

**February 2009**

**Volume 9, Number 1**

**c/- Faculty of Education & Social Work  
The University of Sydney, NSW, 2006**

### **From the President**

The sad news of the passing of David Vale, our *Babel* Production Manager, came at the end of 2008. David's work for the AFMLTA and for *Babel* in particular, will be missed. Included in the first item below are more details on how the AFMLTA were able to honour David for his important contributions to our profession.

The following items then offer updates on other developments in languages education for 2009 and beyond. This includes important details about the keynote speakers and registration for the AFMLTA conference mid year. The NSW Conference Committee are working hard to make sure the conference will be an exciting and engaging experience. I'm looking forward to seeing you there.

*Lesley Harbon*

### **David Vale**

MLTA members will be saddened to hear of the passing of David Vale in late 2008.

The AFMLTA medal was presented to David posthumously at a ceremony held in David's honour in Adelaide. Past AFMLTA Presidents Angela Scarino and Lia Tedesco were able to speak about David's contribution to the teaching and learning of languages in Australia. The citation included these words:

*The AFMLTA Medal for Outstanding Service to Language Teaching in Australia has this day, Tuesday, November 25<sup>th</sup>, 2008, been presented posthumously in recognition of David Vale's contribution to languages education.*

*David began his career in languages education in the mid 1960s at Nuriootpa High School in South Australia. As a young teacher of German, David quickly displayed leadership potential and soon after gained a promotion position as Senior Master at Findon High School where he then spent the next ten years. He subsequently became a Special Senior in Languages, a role designed to ensure that excellent teacher would continue to provide leadership, beyond their school, in their specific curriculum area. It was in this role that David contributed to the work of the Principal Education Officer in Languages in a number of ways e.g. welcoming teacher into his classes on observation of excellent teaching, assessing colleagues for promotion, conducting school visits to advise teachers.*

*David's knowledge and classroom expertise was recognised when he was selected to join a small team of language educators on a federal government initiative, known as the Australian Language Level (ALL) Project, to develop a national curriculum framework for languages.*

## Update on MCEETYA and Other National Projects

The National Strategic Projects, the key elements in the implementation of the *National Statement and Plan for Language Education* are all progressing and some are now complete.

1. ***Investigation into the current provision of Indigenous languages programmes in Australian schools:*** Conducted by ACER. This project aimed to improve the sustainability and quality of Indigenous language programs delivered in Australian schools and to promote good practice nationally. See draft report at: <http://www.languageseducation.com/purdie0611.pdf>.

2. ***Investigation into the state and nature of languages education in Australian schools:*** Conducted by the Research Centre for Languages and Cultures Education at the University of South Australia. The report is now published and available at: [http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/school\\_education/publications\\_resources/profiles/investigation\\_languages\\_in\\_schools.htm](http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/school_education/publications_resources/profiles/investigation_languages_in_schools.htm). This project attempted to build on previous research to generate a comprehensive national picture of the current state and nature of languages education in Australian schools. The aim was also to recommend strategies to increase the effectiveness and quality of school-based languages programs.

3. ***Develop a nationally coordinated promotion of the benefits of languages learning in schools:*** The National Promotions Project was jointly undertaken by the Asia Education Foundation (AEF) in collaboration with the AFMLTA. The promotional materials were distributed to schools in late 2008. The AFMLTA was able to help distribute some of the materials

*As a member of the ALL team, David developed a national profile as a provider of in-service to teachers of languages and as a co-author of the materials. In particular, he was responsible for the now famous Pocket ALL.*

*David's work in senior secondary education in languages was extensive contributing to all aspects of syllabus design and assessment both in languages in general and in German in particular, including being the Chief Examiner for PES German for five years.*

*David's talents in editing were brought to the fore when he was elected in 1991 to the position of Subeditor and Production Manager of Babel, the national journal of the Australian Federation of Modern Languages Teachers Associations. It was in this role that David contributed most significantly to the AFMLTA.*

*He worked as Editor between 1997-2002 and continued until November 2008 as the Production Manager of the journal. During his time in these roles, David's trademark has been to produce a high quality journal, both in content and production, and render it accessible and appealing to classroom teachers.*

*David was much respected by teachers and colleagues for the strength of his teaching. Throughout his career and contribution to the profession, David has been well known for his attention to detail, particularly his love of grammatical accuracy, his general love of languages, leadership in the field, and his keen wit.*

through the posting of the last *Babel* issue for the year.

These materials complement and support any promotional activities that schools, associations and organisations may wish to undertake. The package consists of five materials:

- A brochure for school principals and leaders
- Two different postcards for classroom teachers
- A postcard for Australian parents
- A poster for students and classrooms

The pamphlet for principals and school leaders describes the benefits of Languages learning and offers practical ideas that can be undertaken to support languages learning in schools. The two postcards for teachers are designed for non-Languages teachers and aim to support whole school engagement with Languages education. Each postcard includes a quote from one of the project's 'Languages champions'. The postcard for parents is also designed to support broad engagement with languages across the school community. The student and classroom poster appeals directly to students, encouraging them to engage with Languages as part of their school experience. All of the materials are also available in electronic format on the 'Languages Open the Door to a Bigger World' website [[www.languagesopenthedoor.edu.au](http://www.languagesopenthedoor.edu.au)].

**4. Review of teacher education for languages teachers:** Conducted by the Australian Council for Educational Research. The report is now complete and is available at:  
[http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/school\\_education/publications\\_resources/profiles/review\\_language\\_teacher\\_education.htm](http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/school_education/publications_resources/profiles/review_language_teacher_education.htm).

The project aimed to produce a comprehensive national picture of language teacher education and retraining opportunities for both primary and secondary languages teachers. It also intended to determine how well these prepare teachers for the profession.

**5. Develop and distribute a guide to the teaching, learning and assessment of**

**languages in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century for schools and teachers:** Conducted by the Research Centre for Languages and Cultures Education at the University of South Australia. This project developed support materials aimed at languages teachers and school leaders in Australian primary and secondary schools and after-hours ethnic/community language schools, to assist them in planning, resourcing, implementing and evaluating effective languages programmes based on an intercultural approach. The *Guide* will be distributed soon to all schools.

**6. Leading Languages Education Project:** The Leading Languages Education website is a resource and professional development site to support principals and schools leaders in leading languages education in Australian schools. It is still going strong and is a "must bookmark" for your office computer. The project's website is live at [www.apapdc.edu.au/leadinglanguages/](http://www.apapdc.edu.au/leadinglanguages/)

**7. National Seminar on Languages Education:** After the first seminar was held in Canberra on 30 and 31 October 2006, a subsequent seminar was held on 29-30 November 2007. All jurisdictions met and reported on progress in implementing the National Plan. It was attended by some 150 delegates from all educational sectors in each state and territory; and by representatives of business and industry. The AFMLTA was given the opportunity to put forward its views during several sessions at the Seminar. A digital resource showcasing segments of the National Seminar is available on the AEF website. (The AFMLTA also had the opportunity in late 2007 to express these views through a number of radio interviews and interviews with the press.)

**8. Professional Standards Project Phase 1:** Conducted by the AFMLTA. This national professional learning initiative uses the *Professional standards for accomplished teaching of languages and culture* as a

framework. The National Training for the National Training Team was held in Adelaide over three days from 26-28 March. Stream A (overview workshops for large groups of teachers) was conducted in each state and territory in the first half of the year. Stream B and teacher investigations continued with smaller groups of teachers through the second half of last year. See the website for more information at:  
<http://www.pspl.unisa.edu.au/>.

#### **9. Professional Standards Project Phase 2:**

To be conducted by the AFMLTA, 2009-2010. Approval has been given for the AFMLTA to collaborate with the team at the Research Centre for Languages and Cultures at the University of South Australia to prepare Stream C which will focus on assessment. There will also be more news on further funding for Stream A. Watch for more information coming through from the MLTAs.

#### **10. Endeavour Language Teacher Fellowships**

*(January each year):* Conducted by the Asia Education Foundation. Approximately 200 practising and preservice language teachers participate in in-country study programs in January each year. Programs run in Germany, Italy, France, Japan and China, Spain, Korea and Jordan. Bahasa Indonesia continues to be held in Darwin. The following website contains much more information:  
[http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/school\\_education/programmes\\_funding/programme\\_categories/key\\_priorities/endeavour\\_language\\_teaching\\_fellowships/](http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/school_education/programmes_funding/programme_categories/key_priorities/endeavour_language_teaching_fellowships/)

**11. Improvement in the national coordination & quality assurance of Ethnic Schools:** Conducted by Community Languages Australia. Phases 1 and 2 of this project have concluded. The Final Report of Phase 1, together with Community Languages Education in Australia, a statement prepared by Community Languages Australia, and An Operational and Procedures Manual for Community Languages Schools, are available on

the Community Languages Australia website at:  
[www.communitylanguagesaustralia.org.au/](http://www.communitylanguagesaustralia.org.au/)  
Phase 3 is now underway.

#### **12. Student participation data collection:**

Conducted by the Research Unit for Multilingualism and Cross-cultural communication (RUMACCC) at The University of Melbourne. This data collection was a first step towards comprehensive national data collection on student participation in languages education. Reports of student participation for 2005 and 2006 have been finalized and provided to Working Party Members. Reports for student participation in 2007 and 2008 will be developed this year.

#### **13. Intercultural Language Teaching and Learning in Practice (ILTLP) Project:**

Conducted by the Research Centre for Languages and Cultures Education at the University of South Australia and funded through the Australian Government Quality Teaching Program. The project website is now complete and is live at [www.iltlp.unisa.edu.au](http://www.iltlp.unisa.edu.au).

#### **14. Collaborative Structural Reform Project: Innovative approaches to the provision of languages other than English in Australian higher education (2005-2008).**

Conducted by the Australasian Council of Deans of Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities (DASSH). The aim of the project was to identify a range of innovative, cost efficient and pedagogically appropriate models for languages other than English (LOTE) delivery and collaboration across higher education. The project identified successful, (components of), existing models, nationally and internationally and developed new and innovative modes of delivery in individual universities and consortia of universities. Further details of the project can be found at [www.dassh.edu.au/casr/](http://www.dassh.edu.au/casr/)

15. **Assessment project:** This new project, conducted by the Research Centre for Languages and Cultures at the University of South Australia, is designed to collect and analyse data about typical student achievement by program type. The fundamental question it will explore is *What is it that children and young people in Australia actually achieve as a result of learning languages as part of their education, at any point along the K-12 continuum?* This work will complement and inform current policy discussion in Australia and the development of the National Curriculum for languages. It will provide important information, given that there is no nationally and jurisdictionally agreed baseline data or reference point that adequately describes what students actually learn in languages education at different points along the K-12 continuum

16. **University Admissions Index (UAI) Project:** Conducted by the Australian Council of Curriculum and Assessment Authorities. The overall goal of this project is the goal of increasing student participation in Languages (with a specific focus on the four NALSSP Languages) at senior secondary level. Two of the key barriers /disincentives for students continuing with their language study into Year 12 are:

- access into courses at senior secondary level
- the perceived impact of the UAI score and the way it is arrived at.

These barriers need to be investigated and addressed, so that the disincentives can be turned into incentives. The two key objectives of this project are (i) to investigate and analyse disincentives associated with access into courses, and (ii) to investigate and analyse disincentives associated with any negative impact of the UAI

17. **Senior secondary syllabus developments:** The Australian Government has provided funding for a national project to develop a curriculum framework and courses of study in Chinese, Indonesian, Japanese and Korean for heritage speakers at the senior secondary level. The

courses of study will cater for those students whose background, experiences and/or achievements make them ineligible for the Continuers course but for whom the Background Speakers course is too advanced. The project will be led by the New South Wales Board of Studies in collaboration with the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority and the SACE Board of South Australia on behalf of the Australasian Curriculum, Assessment and Certification Authorities. The curriculum framework and courses of study will be developed as part of the Collaborative Curriculum and Assessment Framework for Languages (CCAFL) program. A National Forum will be held in Sydney for key stakeholders in late February 2009.

18. **Science and Language Centres for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Secondary Schools:** As part of the 'Building the Education Revolution' plan, the Prime Minister announced on 3 February 2009 that schools could be in line for a share of the 1 billion dollar funding set aside to build language centres in secondary schools. The plans will commence this year with construction completed by 30 June 2010.

## AFMLTA Biennial Conference 2009



The MLTA of NSW is pleased to be hosting the AFMLTA 17th Biennial Conference from 9<sup>th</sup> -12<sup>th</sup> July 2009 at the Four Points by Sheraton Hotel, Darling Harbour, Sydney.

Opening Plenary:

**Professor Miles Turnbull, Canada**

Closing Plenary:

**Professor Ofelia Garcia, USA**

Conference registration is now open. For further details and to register for the conference go to: [www.mltansw.asn.au](http://www.mltansw.asn.au)

This will be the first time the event has returned to New South Wales after 29 years. The theme for the conference is Dialogue Discourse Diversity. It is a wonderful opportunity to learn about new developments, network and share your professional knowledge.

There are limited places at this National Conference, we would encourage you to register as early as possible to avoid missing out.

Early Bird conference registration (\$510) closes on Friday 27th February 2009.

Normal conference registration (\$550) closes on Friday 26th June 2009.

*Conference Registration includes:*

Welcome Reception (drinks and canapés) on Thursday 9th July, lunch and refreshment breaks for the duration of the conference.

*AFMLTA Welcome Cocktail Reception*

The welcome Cocktail Reception will be held on Thursday 9th July from 7pm until 9pm in the Ballroom at the Four Points Sheraton Hotel.

The cost of this is included in your registration fee.

*AFMLTA Gala Dinner*

The AFMLTA will be hosting a gala dinner on Friday 10th July from 7pm. Tickets to this exclusive evening will include a 3 course sit down dinner, all beverages and entertainment. This

event will be held at the Star Room, Darling Harbour and is \$85 per ticket.

More details on the Conference and the MLTA of NSW Conference Committee's planning: go to: [www.mltansw.asn.au](http://www.mltansw.asn.au)