



CONTACT

The Newsletter for the ACT Modern Language Teachers' Association

The ACT MLTA Works 4U!

May

2011

President's Report

Dear members,

As you are all aware, Term 1 was busier than usual for the MLTA for several reasons.

For the first time, we had the Meet and Greet party followed immediately by the Annual General Meeting in February. I am sure you share my opinion that the hotel Pavilion at Northbourne provided an excellent atmosphere for this double event and that you had the opportunity to meet new teachers and old friends.

We started a mega project - updating the Constitution of the MLTA ACT Inc.- and with few more changes which should be done at the AGM in May. I am positive that you will all be proud of our achievement as we will have in hand a working document which is in line with current legislation and relatively easy to follow and work from. Also, we now have a common seal which provides us with the means to seal contracts in relation to the organisation of the AFMLTA Conference 2013.

The other big event was our engagement in responding to the Draft Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Languages. As most of you responded to the paper through the opportunity provided by the Languages Coordinator from the Department of Education, there was no need to double the process by writing a special response in the name of the MLTA ACT. Now, of course, we are waiting to see how clearly and constructively we voiced our opinion into what is expected to bring a major

change in languages teaching and learning in Australia, once completed and implemented.

Equally important is the implementation of the Professional Standards for Teachers and the announced registration of teachers in the ACT, which puts us in the same position as other constituencies in Australia. I strongly believe these two changes will make the MLTA even more important as a professional association as we have the most valuable resources (you, the teachers!) who will be able to deliver quality PDs to support your colleagues. At the same time, we can (and will!) offer many opportunities to each of you to showcase your work, share your expertise and offer your research of teaching practice to gain recognition for skills. This will be evident in your progression from one level to another within the Professional Teachers Standards.

This issue of *Contact* will give you a glimpse of what we have done this year so far and what is to come in the year ahead. Take some time to read it and save a copy for your future reference.

Thanking you once again for the opportunity to lead the MLTA as President in this challenging time, I count on your continued support. Rest assured that **the MLTA works 4U.**

Meri Dragicevic

President MLTA ACT

ACT MLTA EVENT - Dinner and Mini AGM – Thursday, May 26th

May 2011						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

The ACT MLTA term 2 event is here! On May 26th, we will be having a delicious dinner at L'unico Ristorante to have a mini AGM and enjoy those professional conversations about languages that we all need, but rarely get!

Put **Thursday, May 26th (this week)** in your diary now and we look forward to seeing you there.

Inside this issue:

Endeavour Reports 2-5

Meet and Greet 5

Positions Vacant 6

PSP—Stream C 7

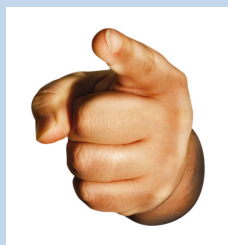
FIPLV applications 8

Thank you! 9

Contact Details 9

Special points of interest:

- ◆ Feature articles—Reports from ELTF recipients
- ◆ Professional Standards Project—Stream C Report and Photos
- ◆ Positions vacant



Endeavour Recipients Report Back on Their Travels



Indonesia

How would I actually go, visiting Indonesia (Bali, to be specific) for the first time ever, after teaching the subject on and off for ... hmm, let's just say more than a few decades! I was certainly very nervous at the start, but I can say with perfect sincerity that the whole experience was amazingly beneficial (yes, including the fact that sometimes I was tired, sticky, slightly lost, etc.).

Our tuition – four hours every morning – couldn't be faulted. My group was a lovely mix of young

and 'mature', with a truly inspirational teacher. We revised, learnt new information or grammar, practised (exercises, conversations, games – some great ideas for the future), listened and viewed. The hours flew by (with morning tea in the middle – opportunity to taste Indonesian snacks). Everyone at the IALF was so anxious for our stay there to be as pleasant as possible, and they were incredibly friendly and helpful.

Afternoons and some of the weekends were taken up with cultural trips and/or activities. From a personal point of view, my highlights ranged from the amazing recycling plant to the tranquil rice terraces of Jatiluwih, from the beautiful Lake Bedugul to a foundation for the disabled. School visits were fascinating too – I wish I had had more time to

soak up the atmosphere and talk to more students. Our weekly group dinners also included performances of traditional dance and music. Talking of dinner, I was one of a number staying with a delightful couple – and I swear Ibu Putu must be the best cook in Bali!

We concluded the programme by presenting our own offerings: first all-woman kecak dance, some very unusual wayang stories, and some interesting uses of technology.

My language skills and confidence soared, and I returned to Australia with brain and suitcase loaded with new items. I could thoroughly recommend this experience to any Indonesian teacher – it really was 'sempurna'!

Cynthia Harris



Japan

I can highly recommend the Endeavour Language Teacher Fellowship as a fantastic opportunity for language teachers. During my 3 week stay in Japan I gained a deeper and richer understanding of Japanese language and culture. Being able to interact in Japanese in everyday situations reinforced my skills and challenged me to learn more.

Kansai University offered a fantastic program of classes, lectures and cultural experiences. The classes were organised into

three groups to cater for the varying language abilities. The topics and language covered in class were both useful and interesting. The classes included ideas and resources that we could use in our classrooms in Australia.

The staff at the university were extremely supportive and accommodating and worked endlessly to ensure we got the most out of our stay. Day trips to temples and places of cultural significance were also organised to enrich our experience.

Another wonderful aspect of the program was the network leaders who were very helpful and knowledgeable. The opportunity

to meet them and other teachers from all over Australia was a highlight of the trip. I returned to Australia with new friends and colleagues as well as a wealth of classroom resources and material which was shared amongst the group.

Overall the Endeavour Language Teacher Fellowship was an invaluable experience and I am extremely grateful to have been able to participate in such a program. It has renewed my enthusiasm for language teaching and has inspired me to keep learning and challenging myself in Japanese.

Linda Morgan

Twice in Italy - Thanks to the ELTF

When the ELTF (Endeavour Language Teacher Fellowships) was established in 2004, I went to Prato. In 2010, the opportunity became available to us again and I went to Venice.

Being immersed in the culture and language you teach is an amazing experience when you share it with a group of colleagues from all around Australia who are willing to 'forget' their English for three weeks and constantly speak in Italian.



Not an unusual meeting with a "Commedia dell'Arte" statue in front of venetian mask-shop.

We were privileged to participate in the programme prepared and delivered for us by the prestigious University Ca'Foscari. My highlight was meeting a lecturer whose textbook I used for years while teaching Italian at Narrabundah College. It was such a privilege to listen to the insights of the lecturers. Their answers were based on contemporary research for methodologies used in their own teaching of languages and in the

ones they propose teachers use. The lessons they demonstrated to us flew by and you could sense the learning happening (teachers improved their tested skills by at least one (and more!) level(s).



All smile after passing the exam. The final ceremony at 'Ca' Foscari' University in Venice.

We travelled around the region and beyond – Trieste, Koper in Slovenia, Padova, Dolomiti, etc. We had organised tours to various museums and galleries and a concert of Vivaldi's 'Four seasons'. We organised a masking-ball, we tasted so many local specialities and learned about and tasted "Spritz" (afternoon drinks and nibbles in bars). We all returned



Yes, life in Venice is life on water. An ordinary fruit and vegetable boat-shop

with hundreds of photographs, stacks of new resources for classes, but most of all, we enriched ourselves with friendship, knowledge, confidence and memories which will last for many years to come. I would not have changed anything, not even the foggy and miserable winter mornings when, as an escape from the weather, sipping a coffee and blending with locals.



Double pleasure - new shoes and what a shoe-shop!

I highly recommend to any Italian language teacher to apply.

Meri Dragicevic



Teachers having fun - When in Venice - do what Venetians do - celebrate 'Il Carnevale'.

Winter Boots and Emergency Buttons

If you've ever had to summarise an experience in just a few words you will know how difficult it can be. Do you go for adjectives: fabulous; intense; invigorating? What about verbs: learning; eating; networking? Although these are all good they don't seem to do justice to the vivid images that are etched into my memory from my ELTF experience. I like to use nouns. Items that stir memories that replay in layers – one unwrapping the other. Winter boots and emergency buttons. Yep, that does it.

ELTF is all about building language skills, bringing social and cultural understanding about the country of focus up to date, and networking. Of course this all happens, and very successfully at that. However, the best memories come from the funny things that happen along the way or the unplanned expeditions that take us out of our everyday realm.

Outside of classes and cultural excursions we spent most of our time at the shops. Part of the joy of having no household duties while away from home is that you can 'play' after school. We would catch the train from Kansai University and head in to the city. Being teachers, our most common place of boosting the Japanese economy was at 100 yen shops. Yes, the delightful places that are more common than MacDonalds and sell a variety of knick-knacks and paraphernalia that we find multiple uses for in the language classroom. And so our stock of resources began to bulge. Being mostly women, another large

percentage of us spent hours pacing the clothing stores. A pattern I have noticed on group trips is that there always seems to be a purchasing trend. On a different trip last year it was watches. This time, it was winter boots. Every day someone would come to class sporting a lovely pair of new boots. I watched with envy until I decided I needed a pair too. Yes Mum, *needed*. However, being a proud size 10 foot I didn't have much luck in the land where leather appears to be in shortage. Feeling a bit like an ugly step-sister trying to squeeze into a glass slipper, I eventually gave up and decided to spend my money on scarves and hair



The street stalls got me again

accessories – they don't discriminate against large-footed-ladies.

Sometimes we would be enticed by the sweet smells of street stalls. Sometimes we would discover excitement on the way and not get to the shops at all. On one of these trips a friend and I joined a throng of people who were swarming a local temple buying good luck charms for their businesses in the coming year. We marvelled as we watched the bamboo branches covered in charms bobbing along

with crowd, and had a great conversation with one of the girls specially chosen to sell the charms. Her name was Heather. She was an American, the first foreigner to be honoured with this role. It was a fascinating night and we returned to our hotel with bellies full of festival food and heads brimming with cultural insights.



Ebisu Festival

But I still haven't told you about the emergency buttons. I don't mean the fashionable (and sometimes functional) little round things that close jackets or give your winter boots an extra level of cuteness. I don't really see how they could be classed as buttons for emergencies (though some divas may disagree). I mean the buttons you find in buildings that you press in the event of an emergency, such as a fire. Japan is highly 'emergency' aware. Quite understandable considering the current circumstances. The building where we had our language classes was quite new and thus fitted with modern conveniences such as automatic toilets. The seats automatically warmed as soon as you sat down (an underestimated

joy in winter months) and the toilets automatically flushed when you stood. Very hygienic. Except when they don't flush. You would then spend a few minutes searching the cubicle for a manual means of clearing the loo. Right next to the toilet paper dispenser was a bright orange button with some Japanese writing that most of us didn't know how to read. Orange is a colour that doesn't exactly welcome feelings of comfort. Like seeing red on a spider, it seems dangerous to touch. Most of the time, the toilet eventually flushed and the orange button remained looking ominous but free from fingerprints. My friend was not so lucky. After several minutes of standing, sitting, standing again and searching for the missing flush button she turned in desperation to the feared orange button. The fire

alarm went off. The rest of us in the lecture room sat wondering if we should evacuate. Japanese men and women in blue work uniforms rushed from every direction to the offending bathroom. Eventually my friend returned to the room looking rather flushed herself and explained with incredible grace and humour what had happened. Needless to say, we can all now read the word on that button.



Todaiji temple in Nara, day trip

Winter boots and emergency buttons. Boots reminding me of all the wonderful adventures we had exploring. Emergency buttons reminding me of Kansai University, the dedicated teachers and the huge amounts of learning that we did there in three wonderful weeks. Perhaps it will be your turn next. What will your few words be?

Sarah Hibberd



Home visit

ACT MLTA Meet and Greet and AGM



The ACT MLTA's first event for the year was the annual 'Meet and Greet' followed by a mini AGM on Thursday, 24th February 2011. It was held at the lovely Pavilion on Northbourne and was attended by many of the wonderful languages teachers we have in the ACT.

The mini AGM helped the executive to make changes to the constitution to ensure its currency. A new executive was elected (see back page), with two more places still to be filled. This year again, the MLTA works 4 U!





The ACT MLTA executive was voted on at the AGM in February, but we are still without people to fill a few positions! Please consider joining us on the executive. You will not be required to do extensive amounts of work, but rather, attend a few meetings and help to organise some interesting and worthwhile events for the members of our association. The positions we have available are on the right. Feel free to email myself or Meri if you would like some more information about the positions. Alternatively, you can join us at the MLTA dinner and let us know there!

Positions Vacant

***Treasurer**

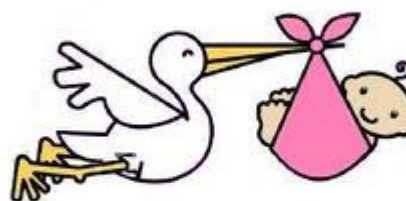
***Membership Secretary**

***Minutes Secretary**



The ACT MLTA would to congratulate Natalie Stewart on the birth of her little girl, *Brianna Kandiye*. Natalie has stepped down from her position as vice-president of the ACT MLTA at this time but will be continuing on as a committee member.

Both mum and baby are doing well and we wish them all the very best.



Professional Standards Project - Stream C... in Brisbane!

The PSP Stream C course began at 8.30am on Thursday 24th March. We were all excited at the opportunity to attend and had been busily reading through the documentation for Streams A and B in preparation. The day began with introductions and icebreaker activities which were a great way to get to know the teachers from the other states. During the morning sessions we did Module 11: Situating language assessment practices. This involved a variety of activities and allowed a generous amount of time to share classroom experiences and ideas. The afternoon sessions covered Module 14: Assessment as inquiry in languages education. This module explored what we aim to achieve through assessment and how we can use the data collected to inform future teaching and learning activities.

Melanie Consola

The focus of the second day's professional development was on Modules 12 and 13 of the Professional Standards Project Stream C.

Module 12 on Ways of Assessing is designed to encourage teachers to evaluate their current assessment practices with a view to broadening

the range of task types used, and exploring the effectiveness of set assessment tasks in eliciting particular types of student understanding. After a small group discussion, we identified the three main task types as those which elicit language knowledge, language use and intercultural understanding. In the discussions, our colleagues agreed upon the importance of each of the tasks types and the need to actively incorporate them into our programs, so as to assess students on the full range of their knowledge, skills and understandings. A valuable activity we undertook was to analyse examples of real assessment tasks to identify the skills and understandings the task would elicit from the students, and how effectively. This is an activity you can engage in with colleagues in your regular school context and can be very powerful in refining and improving your current assessment practices.

Siobhan Lambert

Module 13 prompted the participants to think more deeply about the assessment tools that we use and how we collect evidence of students language proficiency and attainment. A

focus on rubric writing allowed participants to think critically about the criteria and standards that we are assessing. We found the 'rubric on writing rubrics' both humorous and helpful.

At the PSP PD I had the opportunity to collaborate with language educators from a variety of different language backgrounds from various states and territories. I found the interactive nature of the PD to be quite powerful in creating a deeper understanding of assessment in languages. I enjoyed the opportunity to create assessment tools and unpack the meaning behind why we use these tools and the validity that certain tools possess when used effectively. I learnt a lot about the importance of using language authentically in a testing situation to invoke a spontaneous, unrehearsed response which pushes the students to respond using a variety of skills, not just memory and recall of rote vocab and phrases. This looks more deeply at the language construct, and ability to formulate responses and respond appropriately in a realistic manner.

Kate Stuckey



FIPLV Congress 1988 Scholarship

Applications Now Open

What is the FIPLV Congress 1988 Scholarship?

This scholarship was established after the success of the 1988 FIPLV World Congress on language learning which was hosted by the ACT MLTA Inc. It provides financial assistance for teachers wishing to further their professional development by means of travel and associated experiences of educational programs or to develop a special language program.

Who can apply?

Any ACT MLTA Inc. member who:

- ♦ is an **active member** of the ACT MLTA Inc. and who has been a financial member for at least two years prior to applying for the scholarship;
- ♦ intends to continue to work as an ACT language teacher;
- ♦ will use the scholarship within twelve months of receipt of the award;
- ♦ will submit a report of his/her activity for publication in the CONTACT newsletter for the benefit of members of the ACT MLTA Inc.

How to apply

Send your application to the selection committee, including the details below and any other relevant information. Applications should be no more than 3 pages in length. Please include:

- * Full name, and date of birth;
- * Current school;
- * Language teaching experience;
- * Outline of previous overseas experience of any kind;
- * Number of years as an individual, financial member of the ACT MLTA Inc.;
- * Outline of any contribution made to teaching languages beyond the applicants own school;
- * Details of the proposed activity including dates, costs and other any other assistance required.

Who is on the selection committee?

Five members of the executive committee of the ACT MLTA Inc. will read all applications and select one or more or none. This scholarship is offered annually but is not always awarded. It may be awarded to more than one applicant, in which case the sum shall be divided appropriately. The executive fixes the sum annually.

All applicants will be notified of the result. The names of the successful applicants will be forwarded to the Treasurer of the ACT MLTA Inc. The decision of the selection committee shall be final and no correspondence will be entered into in respect of any decision made. The committee shall not publish their reasons for any decision reached or any aspect of the scholarship selection process.

Where to send your application?

FIPLV Congress 1988 Scholarship

ACT MLTA Inc.

GPO Box 989

Canberra ACT 2601

2009 FIPLV Scholarship winner Tina Rodriguez (in red) who used her scholarship money to travel to Italy.



Closing Date: 15th June, 2011

Thank you, Ms Mandy Kalyvas!

감사합니다 Natick
Danke Ευχαριστίες Dalu
Thank You Köszönöm
Grazie Tack
Спасибо Dank Gracias
谢谢 Merci Seé
ありがとう Obrigado

A big 'thank you' to the principal of Hawker Primary School, Ms Mandy Kalyvas, who wrote to the Department of Education to seek recognition of the importance of quality PDs and to provide financial support for the attendance at the AFMLTA Conference in Darwin in July 2011 for her staff member Jennifer Macdonald, our Vice-President. Her letter resulted in DET recognition of the importance of the AFMLTA Conference and it has provided finances to send its language coordinator, Kristina Collins, to the conference as well. The Department will now cover one day of relief for several more members of the MLTA to attend the conference in Darwin which is during term time. We thank Ms Kalyvas for her support to languages teaching in the ACT.

The ACT MLTA Contact Details

Postal Address:

GPO BOX 989
Civic
ACT

Email:

Meri Dragicevic
meri.dragicevic@ed.act.edu.au

Website:

<http://www.mltaact.asn.au/>

THE ACT MLTA WORKS 4 U!

AFMLTA

For further reading about languages teaching in Australia,
please visit the following website:

<http://www.afmlta.asn.au/>

ACT MLTA Executive 2011

President

Meri Dragicevic

Vice-President

Jennifer Macdonald

Treasurer

Vacant

Membership Secretary

Vacant

Minutes Secretary

Vacant

Publicity Officer/Contact Editor

Shannon White

Please send all submissions for Contact to
shannon.white@ed.act.edu.au