

# CONTACT

The Newsletter for the Modern Language  
Teachers' Association of ACT Inc.

## Report from Veronique Canellas, President MLTA ACT Inc.

Dear Members

As we are fast approaching the end of another busy and successful school year it is time to reflect on the many achievements and events we have shared as language teachers in the ACT. Our Association has grown substantially in numbers this year, we have reached 131 members. This is a wonderful testament and a reflection of the desire of language teachers in the ACT to belong to a professional association in this ever changing and dynamic nature of teaching.

We have continued to uphold our motto of *MLTA Works 4 U*. With the collaboration and cooperation of local presenters we have been able to deliver an event each term. This year we were able to hold an extra workshop in June by inviting an international guest presenter, Joe Dale, who delivered a workshop on iPad Apps.

Our annual Breakfast Mini-Conference held on the Saturday 23 August was a huge success and a separate report is available on this event in this edition of CONTACT. Our final event for 2014 was our Term 4 dinner where we heard from Celia Bazalar who was one of the recipients of the 2014 Endeavour Language Teacher Fellowships (ELTF) and Lynden Lawden who was one of the recipients of the 2014 Fédération Internationale des Professeurs de Langues Vivantes (FIPLV) scholarship.

It was also very pleasing to see many of our association members able to attend the recently held ACARA Languages Workshop run by ACARA and hosted at the HBCTL in Stirling on 6 November.



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The ACT MLTA WORKS4U!

With the recent release of the new Australian Curriculum: Languages in Chinese, French, Indonesian and Italian it is paramount that as an Association we continue to support each other during the implementation phase of the new curriculum in the ACT. Seven other languages have also been released on the ACARA website for viewing and we await with great anticipation of their release on the Australian Curriculum website.

The MLTA ACT Inc. hopes to continue to deliver up-to-date and relevant professional learning opportunities in 2015.

One of the highlights this semester was the announcement at the annual Breakfast Mini-Conference in August that the MLTA ACT Inc. had received approval from TQI as a Recognised Provider of Professional Learning.

The Executive of the MLTA ACT Inc. met up with the Language Network leaders of the ACT to begin forging new and exciting professional connections between the Association and all language teachers in ACT education jurisdictions. The Language Network leaders do an amazing job in supporting and promoting language learning and teaching in the ACT.

The MLTA ACT Inc. 2014 Federation Internationale des Professeurs de Langues Vivantes (FIPLV) scholarship recipients were Lynden Lawton and Myriam Davies. Lynden utilised the scholarship to assist her with some of the travel expenses to Italy in order to participate in the research project she was undertaking at university. Myriam traveled to Melbourne to attend the AFTV/FATFA organised by the University of Melbourne. We encourage members of our association to apply for the FIPLV scholarship which is available every year according to certain terms and conditions.

The AFMLTA will be hosting the 20<sup>th</sup> National AFMLTA Languages Conference in Melbourne from 9-12 July 2015. The venue is the Parkville Campus of the University of Melbourne. The conference theme is *Pedagogies for a plurilingual Australia* which reflects Australia's multilingual reality today and also as an inspiration for the future. There has been a call for papers and online registration is also available. More information is available on the AFMLTA website <http://afmlta.asn.au/>

Much of our communication with you is currently undertaken via emails and on our website <http://mltaact.asn.au/>. I encourage you to join our Facebook page and Twitter and share relevant pedagogical information with our members via these forms of media.

Your MLTA ACT Inc. memberships expire on the 28 February of every year and we encourage you to renew your membership early 2015. We will have our *Meet and Greet* in February 2015. The date will be advertised prior to the event.

I would like to extend a sincere thank you to the Executive Committee and Committee of the MLTA ACT Inc. for their tireless hard work and dedication to making our Association such a professional and well respected entity.

### Executive Committee 2014

Vice President – Myriam Davies

Treasurer – Jennifer Macdonald

Secretary – Yvonne Webber

CONTACT Officer (Publication Editor) – Ludivine Le-Gal

Webmaster – Frank Keighley

### Committee Members for 2014

Siobhan Lambert

Natalie Stewart (Public Officer)

Anne-Marie Power

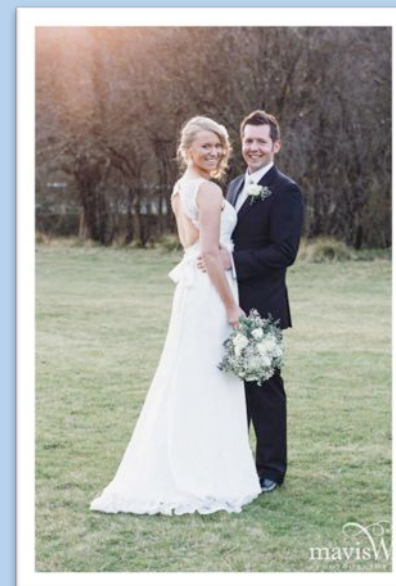
Patricia Blumstein

Tina Rodriguez

To all of our members, thank you for your continued support and feedback. I would like to wish you quality time with your families and friends and hope that you will come back to the new school year in 2015 refreshed and re-energised.

## CONGRATULATIONS!

Congratulations to **Shannon White**, our former Contact Editor, on her wedding on the 28<sup>th</sup> September.



Congratulations to **Ludivine Le-Gal**, our current Contact Editor, on the birth of her son Étienne on the 15<sup>th</sup> November.



## MLTA ACT Mini-Conference – 23 August 2014

### Veronique Canellas, President MLTA ACT Inc

On Saturday 23 August 2014, 62 of our MLTA ACT Inc. members attended the annual Breakfast Mini-Conference at the Australian Catholic University. As a bonus the announcement was made to members that the MLTA ACT Inc. had been given approval as a Recognised Provider of professional learning by the TQI.

We heard from a number of speakers including:

- Andrew Findell-Aghnatos – “Polyglot Extraordinaire!”
- Michele Sharp - "Promoting language learning in your community: ideas and strategies."
- Birgit Matwijiw and Heike Craig - “Running an Immersion Day”
- Kyleigh Howell -“Personalised learning in Japanese - techniques and strategies from Quality Learning and Formative Assessment”
- Ludivine Le-Gal - “IWB games to develop students’ speaking skills”

As is evident in our report card, it was a very successful conference. Some of the requests for next year’s professional learning focus include:

- Managing mixed ability classes – differentiated instruction
- Australian Curriculum: Languages
- Assessment and reporting
- Professional development for college teachers
- More hands-on ICT workshops - creating IWB games, using iPads in classrooms

If you have expertise in any of these areas or you know of a colleague who has expertise in any of these areas then please let us know. If you would like to get involved in organising next year’s event, we would LOVE to hear from you! It is never too early to start thinking about our annual Mini-Conference!

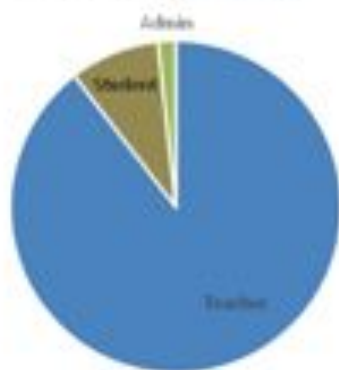




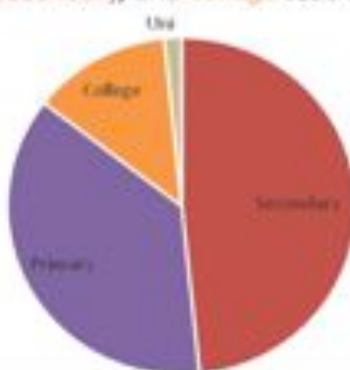
**Our 62 member participants gave their feedback at the conference. Here are the collated results overall!**

	Feedback Area	Rating	MLTA Member Comments
1	Overall Satisfaction	4.7/5	"It was great to see a full-house mini-conference!" "Well-organised event. I am happy that I attended; I am leaving energised!"
2	Format	4.6/5	"Every presentation was exceptionally interesting and useful - well done!"
3	Relevance	4.6/5	"More of the same please. TQI approved too!"
4	Catering- Breakfast	4.7/5	"Very well organised, simple, great food and varied!"
5	Networking	4.5/5	"I like the format of mini-conference as it has many varied presentations and breakfast and breaks provide opportunities to network!"
6	Facilities	4.5/5	"Convenient location!"

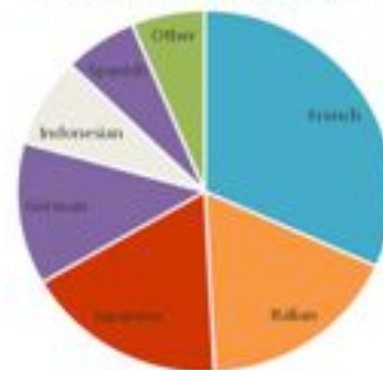
The mini-conference was mainly attended by teachers.



We had a good mix of primary, secondary, and college teachers.



Two thirds of attendees taught French, Italian or Japanese.



## Term 4 MLTA ACT Dinner

### Jennifer Macdonald, French Teacher, Hawker Primary School MLTA ACT Treasurer

Members gathered at the Eastlake Football Club in Griffith on 6<sup>th</sup> November 2014 for the MLTA ACT Term 4 dinner meeting. There was plenty of time for networking and catching up with colleagues before a delicious buffet dinner was served.

We were then treated to informative talks by two of our members.

Celia Bazalar from Hawker College spoke about her adventures and learning on her Endeavour Language Teacher Fellowship to Spain in January 2014. It was her first trip to Spain. Celia strongly recommended that members consider applying for an ELTF.

Lynden Lawton from Yarralumla Primary School was awarded a 2014 FIPLV Congress 1988 Scholarship. Lynden used her scholarship to help fund a three-week study tour to Europe. The tour was organised by the University of Melbourne Masters degree course in Education Policy. Lynden visited schools in Denmark, England and Italy. Lynden also gave a lesson to students in Copenhagen based on the Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) methodology.



**Lynden Lawton and Celia Bazalar**



## 20<sup>TH</sup> National AFMLTA Languages Conference

The 20th National AFMLTA Languages Conference will bring together presentations by inspiring innovators in the languages education field, including Joe Lo Bianco, Diane Larsen-Freeman, leaders in Australian education including Stephen Dinham and teachers sharing Pedagogies for a Plurilingual Australia!



**Register now** to take advantage of Early Bird Rates and keep up to date with all conference information at [#AFMLTA 2015](https://twitter.com/AFMLTA2015) and [conference2015.afmlta.asn.au](http://conference2015.afmlta.asn.au)

## 2015 MLTA ACT – Claim the dates

**2015 MLTA ACT Inc. Meet and Greet** – Thursday 26 February 2015, 4:30pm for 5:00pm start, venue TBA

**MLTA ACT Inc. AGM** – Thursday 19 March 2015, 4:30pm for 5:00pm start, venue TBA

## European Study Tour with the Graduate School of Education, University of Melbourne (13 September – 2 October 2014)

### Lynden Lawton, 2014 FIPLV Scholarship winner

In September/October this year I participated in the European Study Trip which aimed to place the analysis of Australian education policy in a broader national and international context of best practice, and to provide a targeted program of study in three international systems. The students participating in the Study Trip investigated and experienced first-hand the effects of globalisation on pedagogy and curriculum. It is only through an understanding of these responses and the contexts in which they occurred that Australian education policy formation can occur at the level of international best practice.

The European Study Trip involved travel to three nations (Denmark, England and Italy) to enable students to explore and investigate education systems outside Australia. The two main components involved visits to a range of schools and other educational providers, in order to experience first-hand the structures of provision in the host countries. Students were given a tour of the school/institution and briefed by senior members of staff on the mission and clientele of the school/institution and on emerging policy issues as they affect that institution. There were opportunities to ask questions and for discussion.

Students attended multiple seminars which offered a critical perspective on the main challenges facing policy makers in that country. All seminars were comprehensive in the information they provided and presenters were generous with their time and expansive in their responses. The Study Tour was a fantastic experience, not only visiting such interesting and diverse educational institutions, but also for the opportunity to discuss more fully with the Study Tour participants our knowledge, thoughts, opinions and feelings about what we had seen and heard. This is where my learning was

increased, consolidated and expanded.

But how has all this knowledge and experience translated to my classroom practice? One of the many interesting and fascinating experiences for me occurred at Marner Primary School in East London. The majority of Marner Primary School's student population is of Bangladeshi immigrant background. English is not their first language. The general Bangladeshi community has high unemployment, a high incidence of mental health issues and domestic violence.

The Marner Primary School caters for K-6 as well as a Pre-School program and an Early Childhood program. The Principal and Executive Staff see these two additional programs, which are financed by the school and not by the Government, as vital to ensuring academic and social success at the primary school.

It was explained to us that the Bangladeshi children arrive in the Early Childhood program with limited language skills. I initially assumed this was a lack of knowledge of English however it was explained that the children live in an environment where they are not encouraged to speak, ask questions or indeed respond to questions. The term used by the school was "Children are seen but not heard". As a consequence, when children come to school to socialise with other children of their age and participate in storytelling activities, drawing, painting and playing the children are reticent, non-responsive and are unfamiliar with all these 'fun' activities. Not only are they ill prepared for a school-like routine their ability to communicate is almost non-existent. Because these children have what we would term as limited opportunities to communicate the children have not developed adequate muscular strength or control to correctly announce and pronounce speech, be that in their



first language or in English. The Early Childhood Program engages the services of a Speech Pathologist who works with the children to develop speech competencies. By the time these children enter Kindergarten they have had one to two years of expert tuition to prepare them for their transition into the formal education system.

I have always found reading aloud, learning of songs, poems and rhythms to be a very useful tool to encourage students of all ages to speak in Italian. Early in my teaching career I taught Italian to opera singers at the School of Music at the Australian National University. Singing was a part of every lesson and consolidated all the language work we did together.

So in Week 1 of Term 4 a Year 1 student of mine brought to school a book of Italian *Filastrocche* (Tongue Twisters). We chose *E la mamma impasta* to recite at our Assembly in Week 4. We discussed the *filastrocca* line by line, verse by verse. *La mamma* is cooking up combinations of herrings with meringues, crocodiles with blueberries and all manner of revolting combinations! We discussed the rhythms and the rhymes of the lines, the beat of the sounds, what does it mean to announce and how is that different to pronunciation. We put our fingers

on our throats and felt the muscles contract and relax as we made certain sounds. Could we feel the air at the back of our throats as we made the *gn* sound or the sound coming from the base of our throats when we made the *gli* sound? We repeated, repeated, repeated verse by verse reading the words then without reading the words. We giggled at the horrible combinations and tested our memories.

The children closed their eyes and listened to my voice and repeated what they heard. They reflected on whether it was easier for them (individually) to listen and repeat or to read from the board and remember the words? How did they memorise best? What style suited them best? Did they have any other suggestions as to how we could remember the words?

We spent about twenty minutes every morning working on and improving our performance. The day of the Assembly arrived but due to a particularly full program we had to cancel our performance at the 11<sup>th</sup> hour. One Year 1 boy asked "Why aren't we performing?" I explained we would perform in Week 6 and his response was "We'll be even more fantastic then!" That is what I call successful learning!



## FIPLV Scholarship – AFTV / FATFA Conference

**Myriam Davies, French Teacher, Aranda Primary School**  
**French Network Leader, MLTA ACT Vice-President**

Thanks to the MLTA and the FIPLV scholarship I received this year, I was able to attend the AFTV/ FATFA conference on July 25-26 in Melbourne. This annual conference for Victorian French teachers, teamed with the biannual FATFA conference (The Federation of Associations of Teachers of French in Australia) was packed with fantastic keynote speakers and valuable workshops and presentations. One of the keynote speakers was Christian Ollivier from the University of La Reunion, and his key note presentation "L'approche Interactionnelle et le Web 2.0" which he followed with a workshop resonated strongly with me. He highlighted the fact that despite our best effort to make our written tasks as realistic and authentic as possible, they were at the end only tasks written by students for teachers to assess. Despite our talks about the various audience targeted in every task (a letter to a friend, a recipe for a potential book, etc...), all are in reality just fake audiences as the real audience is the teacher and the students are only writing in an attempt to please the teacher. These tasks are of course necessary but Christian Ollivier introduces the idea of writing for the 'real' audience, using site such as Wikipedia, wikimini, etc for the students to experience the real writing, where suddenly the teacher is not the assessor but just a guide into the task. These tasks, are obviously not assessed but give a sense of reality to the students and a lot of them will receive valuable feedback from their targeted audience. I found Christian Ollivier's presentation and workshop refreshing and full of potential. Another key note speaker who really impressed me with his presentation was Yves Jacquier, from New Caledonia's Délégation Académique aux Relations Européennes, Internationales et à la Coopération. Despite not being a teacher, Yves Jacquier created a fantastic amount of resources for French teachers to use on the centenary of WW1. His research, knowledge and organisation was phenomenal and certainly saved French teachers a lot of work and preparation, should they want to tackle the topic in the next two years. Finally, Nicolas Gouletquer from the French Embassy presented a vibrant portrait of the French language in Australia and showed that French is still truly alive in Australia, thanks to various dynamic and lively projects from every sectors. I am feeling really grateful for the professional opportunities that the MLTA ACT gave me when granting me this scholarship as I left from this conference with a very positive message and many new ideas and resources easily and quickly exploitable in the classroom.



## ACT Catholic Schools – Indonesian Teachers Network

### Arika Bassett, Indonesian Teacher, Holy Family Primary School

Our group formed in June 2012. It began when three Corpus Christi schools (Holy Family PS, St. Clare of Assisi PS and St. Francis of Assisi PS) in South Canberra started their tri-school combined meeting. With the encouragement and support from Anne-Marie Marek, the Principal of Holy Family, the group was organised and the first meeting was hosted at Holy Family PS. However, it was decided to open the meeting to all Indonesian teachers in Catholic Education Office schools.

There are 7 primary schools teaching Indonesian in ACT. They are Holy Family at Gowrie, St. Clare of Assisi at Conder, St. Francis of Assisi at Calwell, St Thomas the Apostle at Kambah, St Michael's at Kaleen, Mother Teresa at Harrison and St Jude's at Holder. As of 2013, there are no ACT Catholic High Schools teaching Indonesian.

Our first meeting went well, each of us sharing what we had done in our school. Since then we have been meeting regularly, at least once a term. Mostly we share ideas, resources, borrow and lend teaching materials, discuss articles/readings, look at some assessment pieces. We take turns to host the meetings in our schools. Each of us always has something interesting to show and say. There are always questions to ask and answer. Our gatherings often look like *show and tell*!

A highlight for our group was when we organised our own IT Professional Learning at the beginning of 2013, with the help of CEO IT officer Kel Hathaway. The theme was working with *LIFE*. We realised that there were not many Language Professional Learning opportunities available at the CEO at that time.

The Australian Indonesian Curriculum came on line this year and we are trialing it. This is creating an opportunity to work more collaboratively and plan units together. As a result there are a lot of emails going forward and backwards between us, relating to the new curriculum.

Our group has been functioning for a while now and it has been an ideal way of supporting each other as lone language teachers in the primary school setting. Yes, it is an extra activity in our own time to get together but we keep bringing our stories, experience, expertise, knowledge and skills to the meetings, which assists us to stay in the job, treasuring the existence of Indonesian language programmed in our schools. We are not alone!



#### From Left to Right

Arika Bassett, Holy Family PS, with two officials (Indonesian dancers) from the Indonesian Embassy

Janet Oxwell, St Thomas the Apostle PS, with a Barong Balinese dance

Nicola Barkley, St Francis of Assisi PS, with Indonesian Primary students in Pekalongan, Central Java

Zita Clifford, St Michael's PS

Lily Djohan, St Clare of Assisi PS

Jo Chivers, Rosary PS



## French Poetry Competition

**Myriam Davies, French Teacher, Aranda Primary School**  
**MLTA ACT Vice-President, French Network Leader**

On Thursday 30 October, French students, parents and French teachers met at the Alliance Française for the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual French Poetry Competition Prize ceremony. This year again, the competition was well supported as we had 96 entries from 10 different schools. Students were given a term to learn a French poem by heart and their teachers had the task to make the first selection by choosing the best two students for each year level in their schools. As always, we have two categories of poems, one for the French-speaking community in Canberra and one for the non-francophone students. We even had two pre-schoolers this year! Students recited their poems brilliantly and confidently in front of a crowded audience and were awarded certificates and books generously donated by the French Embassy. This event gives the students the chance to experience what it feels like to be a student in France where poetry reciting is still an important part of the curriculum and brings them an important intercultural understanding. Thank you to the Alliance Française and the French Embassy for their continual support in this event.





## Yarralumla Primary School travels to Bergamo

### Sharon Brissoni, Italian Program Coordinator

During the recent term break I accompanied a group of 19 students and their parents from Yarralumla Primary School to Scanzorosciate in the province of Bergamo, Italy. One of my duties as Yarralumla Primary School's Italian Program Coordinator, is to organise the school's biennial Community Trip to Italy. The choice of Bergamo was because of my close connections to the city as I lived there for a number of years.

Yarralumla students learn Italian through a CLIL approach (Content and Language Integrated Learning). During the trip, students were billeted for the week, from the 6<sup>th</sup> to the 10<sup>th</sup> October, with Italian families within the community of Scanzorosciate. During that week all students attended classes at the local Italian primary schools. They participated in regular classroom tasks and extra-curricular activities such as excursions and sport. They were totally immersed in the language and culture of this beautiful region set at the foothills of the Orobic Alps. Scanzorosciate is famous for producing the *Moscato* wine typical of this area.

Yarralumla parents were also kept busy during the week visiting the historical *Citta' Alta* of Bergamo and other scenic areas close by like Como, Verona and Milano.

It was a truly remarkable experience for everyone but particularly the students who developed strong friendships and connections with the Italian schools and community of Scanzorosciate. Evviva Berghem!



Piazza Vecchia in Citta' Alta.



View of Citta' Alta, Bergamo



La Funicolare di Bergamo.

Sharon Brissoni is the Italian Program Coordinator at Yarralumla Primary School. She is a member of MLTA ACT and Victoria as well as the Victorian Bilingual Schools Network. Sharon is a qualified CLIL teacher since 2011, completing her studies through Università Ca' Foscari Dipartimento di Studi Linguistici e Culturali Comparati, Venice.

## Yarralumla Primary School

### Meri Dragicevic, Italian Teacher

#### Learning with Language Perfect

We subscribed all Year 3- 6 students to use the Language Perfect site. The Italian teachers provided ample activities for homework which students could use to clarify and reinforce their understanding of the content taught in Italian classes.

Also, by using this internet site students could extend their knowledge in many different areas of study such as other languages, History, Maths, Science, etc.

From 19<sup>th</sup> -29<sup>th</sup> May students were competing in the **'Language Perfect World Championship 2014 in Languages'**. This is a great achievement for all 90 students who took the challenge, as the participation over 10 days required good memorisation strategies, good linguistic knowledge of both Italian and English, typing skills, determination, motivation and self-discipline. To gain one point one needs to correctly answer every question three times over ten days. Our students answered in total 117,325 questions of which 112,698 in Italian.

Students achieved four Gold, seven Bronze and fifteen Credit Awards. **Congratulations to our 26 World Champions!**



## Learning from the Italian teachers who visited Yarralumla Primary School in July

Yarralumla Primary School continues to attract teachers from Italy willing to spend their school holidays participating in our school activities. Why, one may ask. The answer is simple. Our school is implementing the Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) methodology which is becoming a compulsory methodology in teaching a second language in Italy. This means that for them equally important was observation of English classes as well as the ones conducted in Italian.

Our students had a great time and learned a lot by engaging in music, sport and conversations in Italian in class as well as at the playground. The Year 4/5 students were particularly lucky to work with Elisabetta JANKOVIC who is a published author and she created with them a memorable assembly "Il Re Tlo e la Sirenetta".

While at school the visiting teachers used the opportunity to practise their English, which most of them will start teaching next year. They were also valuable partners in collaborative conversations about how to plan and prepare CLIL lessons in our integrated unit.

This visit was also the opportunity for a number of families whose children attend YPS to host these teachers and thus engage in learning Italian from native speakers. It provided a solid ground for them to see many exhibitions in national institutions in Canberra and they travelled around Australia. This visit provided the opportunity to consider the possibility that our students and teachers visit their respective schools in Italy.



Vita, Daniele, Enrica, Lucia, Sara, Elisabetta, Marina, Meri



## Visit to the Australian War Memorial with French President, François Hollande, and Australian Prime Minister, Tony Abbott

### Kiraly Middleton, Head of Languages, Amaroo School

On Wednesday 19 November, Amaroo School was invited to send a delegation of students to a special tree-planting ceremony at the Australian War Memorial. Harry P, Grace U, Tanisha J, Dinky V, Jenny A and Emily C in Years 9 and 10 were lucky enough to see French President, François Hollande, and Australian Prime Minister, Tony Abbott, planting a French Oak in the grounds of the Memorial, using soil from the French town of Villers-Bretonneux, where many Australian soldiers fought and died during World War I. Afterwards, the students got to test their French skills by speaking to Monsieur le President, and also meeting our Prime Minister. This group of six students were outstanding ambassadors for Amaroo School, and were chosen for this privilege due to their recent overseas excursion to France and Belgium on the Amaroo School French trip with Madame Canellas and Madame Middleton. During their overseas trip they visited Villiers Bretonneux and other significant areas of the Somme. What a wonderful opportunity for students to use their language skills!





## Amaroo School - Language Perfect Triple Champions: A student with the Recipe for Success!

### Siobhan Lambert, French and Japanese Teacher, Amaroo School With the kind participation of Aariel Bonnitcha

*Amaroo School has again shown its Language Perfect enthusiasm with another win in the ACT State Competition this August.*

Recently, the staff and students here at Amaroo School managed to defend our title of ACT State Champions by answering **2,997,860 questions** and earning a score of **231,461 points** in the Language Perfect ACT State Competition!

This was not our only achievement though, as we managed to become triple champions, taking out not only the Top School category, but also the Top Class and Top Student categories! My Year 7 French class very much enjoyed their pizza party with everyone really putting in the hard yards to achieve this outstanding result. There was one student, however, the ACT's Top Performing student, who really helped us bring the title home.

**Aariel Bonnitcha** in Year 7 began learning French only this year, but has already made huge leaps forward in her learning, and claims Language Perfect has been a key factor in her success. I interviewed Aariel, who scored a huge 23,500 points in the competition, to hear her top tips on being a successful French learner and Language Perfect champion.

#### What do you like most about Language Perfect?

What I like the most about Language Perfect would have to be that it's so easy to complete activities, and you practice each question over and over, which makes you remember the words, and the audio is also really helpful.

#### How did you really become a Language Perfect enthusiast?

My enthusiastic French teacher and the students all around the school that were excited about the competition definitely made me motivated to participate. I was also very determined to do well in my new school and when my friends explained Language Perfect to me, it sounded like something that could really help me with my French, considering I had never learnt a language before and I was nervous because I was behind.

#### How has Language Perfect most assisted your language learning?

I can't even describe how much Language Perfect has assisted me in my learning this year. I came to Amaroo School only knowing "Croissant" and "Bonjour" both of which I couldn't even pronounce properly. Language Perfect has helped me (and still does) with picking up new words and with the repeated questions on the website; it also helps with speed and accuracy.



**Aariel is a true Language Perfect enthusiast**

### Did you have set goals for the competition?

For the World Championships, I remember when our French teacher was talking about the competition and everyone was talking about their goals and I whispered to my friend that I was going to get 10,000 points. My friend looked at me like I was crazy (which I can't exactly argue with) and I said I'd get 7,500 points instead. I still kept the 10,000 in the back of my head though!

For the ACT Championship, my goal was 13,000 points, but I had to remember that this competition went for seven days and not ten like the last one. I think I got 13,000 points on the third or fourth day, so I kind of just kept going.

### What encouraged you to continue competing when competition was fierce?



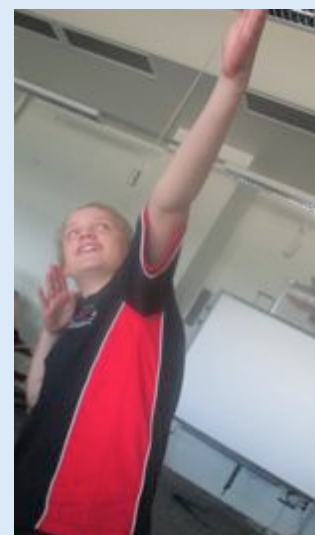
Ariel carrying in some of the pizzas enjoyed in our class's \$100 Pizza Party

When I was doing the World Championships, what kept me going was that Elite Certificate. I told myself that when I'd get to 10,000 points I'd be happy. There was also this one kid in my class who I was determined to beat, so when the competition got fierce I thought if I had tried so hard up until now, what would be the point of giving up now?

For the ACT Championships, my goal from the start was to place in the top three and I was also pretty keen on the idea of a shiny medal and an iTunes voucher. What kept me going during the last three days, when the competition was particularly fierce, top three or not, was that there was just no way that I was going to give up after how much effort I'd put in, and hours of sleep I'd lost, as well as the friends I had also probably lost because I refused to talk to anyone if we weren't at school (yes, I'm mean!). When I got into first place for a few hours, I realised that maybe I could come first against these other people. I kind of liked being in first place, so I was going to keep trying my hardest.

### What advice/top tips would you have for other students in the ACT who want to be Language Perfect champions like you?

*"Language Perfect Champion" (laughs)* - I'm not sure if taking advice from me is a good idea but I'd say it helps to set a realistic goal at the start of the competition. Also try not to stay up until 2am and only get four hours of sleep, because when you get to school you can't think at all which isn't fantastic. Another tip would be to remember to eat and drink water because I didn't really do much of that and put that with not sleeping...it wasn't great for my health... Also remember to repeat the lists the next day and after a week so you can get more points. Start with the easy lists first so after seven days you can repeat the easy ones. Don't listen to anyone who says to start with the harder lists, especially if you want a head start in the competition!



Ariel's "Language Perfect Champion" pose



# Languages Evening at Canberra High School

**Yvonne Webber, French Teacher, MLTA ACT Secretary**

Canberra High School held its inaugural Languages evening on Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> of September 2014. Our aim was to have students communicate with the school community about the French and Mandarin programme at our school. Our SLC started us thinking about this in 2013 but we began serious planning in term 2 of 2014. We wanted students to be fully involved not just in performing and putting work on display but also in the planning and running the event on the night. We wanted them to be able to do this in both languages. We talked with students about how they could contribute in addition to creating work for display we had volunteers for designing the layout and setting up on the night, for MCs on the night and for ushering among other things. The year 7s and 8s were set specific themes to research then create work for display. The year 8s had to make labels in French/Mandarin. Some year 8 French students created PowerPoints with text in the target language. Year 9 students created comic short videos with spoken text in French including a parody of a French vs Australian cooking show.



## Languages Evening at Canberra High School (continued)

The evening was organised in two parts in the first segment students and parents were given time to wonder around the exhibition and to buy food. Then in the second segment everyone moved into the hall for the concert. The structure of the evening was facilitated by having a large enclosed space right next to the school hall. This made the movement from one segment to the next quite easy. There was, of course, food. The French had crepes which are easy to make and the Mandarin students did Chinese dumplings also relatively easy. Both were in great demand. Year 10 students were MCs for the concert and they alternated their patter between French, Mandarin and English. The concert included year 7s doing a dance to the Gummy Bear song in French, a fashion parade of Chinese dress from different regions, singing in both languages among other items. The concert and the evening closed with the only item not done by students, a Lion Dance by a professional company.





# Italian Language classes at Telopea Park School

**Larissa Shihoff, Italian teacher**

## Comedia Dell'Arte

In term 2 the Italian Year 9's worked busily on a *Commedia Dell'Arte* performance for their oral assessment. They were guided by two teachers, Signora Shihoff for the language component and Mr Spahr for the theatre component. A pre-service teacher from University of Canberra, Ms Yvanovich also helped the class with their dialogues and skits. She commented on the Unit: *"it was great to see the students connect with Italy's rich cultural heritage and to see them having fun becoming their characters through walking, movement and language."*

## Francesco Crispino

While studying Italian immigration for Term 3, the Year 10 Italian class had the pleasure of hosting and hearing about the life journey of Francesco Crispino. Signor Crispino is an Italo-Australian immigrant from Naples who took a job for Alfa Romeo in the 1970's and ended up loving Canberra so much he decided to remain here. He told the students some interesting and shocking tales about life in Naples during the war. Many families in Naples did not have any work and Francesco's father did not work for many years, having no job opportunities due to his refusal to join the fascist party. So Francesco and his brothers and sisters were forced to steal clothes and food from the resident American navy troops. He said that if you were caught stealing chocolate milk, the Americans would make you eat the entire packet. If you were caught stealing clothes, the American troops would strip you of all your clothes and send you off completely starkers. It was an interesting and valuable lesson in Italian history.



## Tess Yvanovich, Preservice Teacher

This term, Telopea Park School's Year 8 Italian students are learning all about food. Recently, they discovered some interesting Italian sayings to do with food. Students had fun guessing what each saying might mean – some were more obvious, but others were quite surprising! Have you heard any of these before?

- Avere sale in zucca (*lit. To have salt in the pumpkin*) – To be smart
- Tutto fa brodo (*lit. Everything makes broth*) – Every little bit helps
- Che cavolo! (*lit. What cabbage!*) – Darn!
- Avere il prosciutto sugli occhi (*lit. To have prosciutto over the eyes*) – To bury your head in the sand

Allora, siamo alla frutta! (*lit. We're at the fruit, meaning we're at the end, since Italians often eat fruit at the end of a meal!*)





## Daramalan College – Visit to Japanese Tanken Centre

### Georgia Wemyss, Japanese Teacher

On Thursday 11 September, students from Daramalan in Years 9 & 10 had an amazing visit to the Japanese Tanken Centre in Kirrawee, Sydney.

The Tanken Centre is a traditional style Japanese house and is a project funded by the NSW Government to help students of Japanese to try immersing themselves into a Japanese home-style cultural experience whilst learning the language. It is the closest thing you would get to a Japanese home stay without leaving Australia! The architecture is typically Japanese right down to the special entryway (genkan) where we left our shoes, the delicate but durable tatami mat floors and the sliding paper doors (shoji) which allow light and privacy but cut draughts.

The whole day was spent listening to and speaking in Japanese - the hosting teachers wouldn't allow any English while we were in the house and students were amazed at how much language they could remember without prompting when they were put into the situation in real life! The teachers worked closely with the students level by concentrating their activities on the most recent chapters that students have covered in their text books - which was great to cement their learning!

Students commented that it was fantastic to be able to see the decor and colours, feel the materials used to make the building and its furnishings, smell the fresh tatami mats and experience a real Japanese style house. The house also had a beautiful Japanese garden (niwa) where we ate our Japanese style obento lunch while we admired the flowers and rock garden.

We played many games throughout the 4.5 hour program and the highlight was surely the “game show” style activities. We had been split into 4 groups and we all competed as teams, donning silly costumes of geisha and samurai, swinging rubber mallets and trying to be the first to press the buzzer and answer the questions!

A great experience and all students were very happy with the “tanken” they had enjoyed that day!





## Daramalan College Students travel to La Maison de Ste Claire (NSW)

### Bobbie Dawson, French Teacher

#### Student article



On Saturday, 26<sup>th</sup> of July a group of year 9 and 10 French students travelled along the coast into Northern New South Wales before heading inland to Upper Crystal Creek (NSW). We were excited to arrive at La Maison de Ste Claire, a French language and cultural centre, for a French Immersion Weekend. As soon as we arrived it was



*français, français, français!* From this tropical, rainforest location we completed formal language tuition with Gilles and learnt some very helpful study tips to help us in all of our subjects. Thanks to Gilles and Zarina Berger, it was a very productive weekend where we all improved our French communication skills and learnt a lot about French culture. We did a lot of cultural activities, including participating in a French cooking class where we learnt (in French!) how to make classic French dishes including crème caramel. These activities, along with watching French movies and eating traditional French food for our meals, almost made us feel like we were no longer in Australia. After the French lessons were over on Monday, we spent our last sunny afternoon sight-seeing in Byron Bay. We visited Cape Byron to see the lighthouse and the most Easterly Point in Australia. Free time before dinner allowed us to visit the gorgeous beaches and shop in the local ('hippy') stores. It was a great trip and we would recommend that all future French students go to enjoy the scenery and improve your ability and confidence in French. Merci!

<http://www.maisondesteclaire.com/>

## Kirmes for Year 8 German students

### Heike Craig, Head of Languages

September 23 saw 150 Year 8 students from across the Canberra region gather at Daramalan College for Kirmes, a German harvest festival. These students of German had a fabulous day making traditional Schultüten, decorating gingerbread hearts, creating Karneval masks, learning a German folk dance, engaging in customary German games and sports and undergoing training in the German New-Year's convention of Bleigießen. They also enjoyed the 'usual' German fare of Bretzeln and Bratwurst. The more senior Daramalan German students from Years 10-12 stepped up to the role of instructors and leaders for the day, educating a whole new generation of students about a mixture of German culture and customs. The Daramalan students leading the activities received high praise from attending staff from the other schools; they were all very impressed with the professional and knowledgeable way they conducted themselves and the activities. A great day was had by all and many people are now looking forward to next year's Kirmes.

## Marist College – Intensive French Language and Cooking Day

Kate Lofthouse, Head of Languages



On Thursday 11 September, as part of their current unit of language study, the Year 11 students of French were able to spend a whole day at Le Très Bon school of cooking in Bungendore under the guidance of Christophe Grégoire who is a cordon bleu chef.

After a welcome breakfast of homemade croissants and quince jam, the boys were entertained by a highly informative talk from Joséphine Grégoire about the history of restaurants and restauration.

Then it was down to cooking up a French storm! Under Christophe's expert and gentle guidance in French, the boys prepared Vosges-style potato confit & smoked pork, followed by a crème caramel and role play scenarios in a restaurant where they had to negotiate the purchase of a meal with a real French waiter.

I congratulate the students on their commitment, culinary skills, politeness and their linguistic efforts. It was a wonderful day and they all proved to be excellent ambassadors for the College.



[letresbon.com.au](http://letresbon.com.au)



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For further reading about languages teaching in Australia, please visit the following website:  
<http://www.afmlta.asn.au/>



@MLTAACT



MLTA ACT Inc.

**Are you doing something interesting at your school with your languages teaching?**

**We would LOVE to hear about it!**

We have so many experienced and dedicated language teachers in the ACT and they should definitely be promoted and acknowledged for their amazing work!

If you are doing something special at your school, the members of the ACT MLTA would love to hear about it. You might even inspire someone to have a go at something different too. You might like to ask a student to write a review of their learning in class! We would love to hear about any schools going overseas this year also.

Please forward all anecdotes and photographs to the Contact editor:

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We look forward to hearing your stories!



**The ACT MLTA WORKS4U!**