

Languages  
Week 2017

# Celebrate Languages Week!





# What is Languages Week?

Languages Week 7-14 August is designed to raise awareness of the benefits of language learning, highlight the linguistic diversity in our community and celebrate the work of our students and teachers in community language schools and primary and secondary schools. Learning a language encompasses much more than language proficiency. Knowing a language means knowing about the culture that is the foundation of that language.

Our world is becoming increasingly interconnected and interdependent. Language learning is an essential skill for life in the 21st century.

Language learning helps us to broaden personal, social, cultural and employment opportunities.

More than 270 languages and dialects are spoken in Western Australia today and Languages Week provides an opportunity to explore and celebrate language learning.

Languages Week is being promoted as part of Languages in the Mainstream – a 12-month partnership project between the Modern Language Teachers' Association of Western Australia Inc (MLTAWA) and the Office of Multicultural Interests (OMI). The project promotes the benefits of language learning and celebrates and showcases our linguistic diversity in WA.

# What can I do to celebrate Languages Week?

There are heaps of competitions and events that you can join – visit <http://mltawa.asn.au> to find out more.

Here are some ideas on how to prepare for and celebrate this year's Languages Week.

## Ideas for schools

- Survey your class and collect data about what languages are spoken in the homes of your students, make a class display or a display for the whole school.
- Collect the MCEETYA data of languages spoken at home by total numbers of students at the school. Get Mathematics teachers to incorporate the data in lessons during Languages Week.
- Email parents or post in the school newsletter about the benefits of language learning and bilingualism.
- Choose a word/phrase related to the class culture, such as 'respect', and translate into different languages and display in the classroom.
- Hold an after school lesson of the target language(s) offered at the school, for parents.
- Invite parents to hold a language lesson each day of Languages Week, showing the diversity of languages in the school community.
- Play a game with numbers in another language (eg Bingo).
- Dance to a fitness video in another language.
- Establish an agreement with a cafe, shop or restaurant near the school that will provide a 10% discount if students from your school use a specific/target language.
- Global DJ: Give one class the task of playing music with lyrics in a language other than English at lunch time (using the PA system or using speakers in an area of the school). Each student of the class chooses a song so there is a variety of language and music styles.
- Find out what language is/used to be spoken by the Aboriginal people of the land on which your school is located. How has the language changed over the years? Why has this happened? What language(s) do you think will be spoken in 100, 200 years from now?
- Advocate for a Languages Policy to be developed and implemented at your school.



## Competition!

Take part in the 2017 SBS National Languages Competition, which opens 24 July. Record a 30 second video about what learning a language means to you and upload to the <http://www.sbs.com.au/radio/article/2017/05/09/sbs-radios-national-languages-competition-2017>

## Ideas for families

- Bilingual children can take part in the [Let Me Tell You a Story, Let Me Tell You in My Language](#) competition by producing an eBook or film. Submissions close 14 July.
- Download a language learning app such as Duolingo or Education Perfect and compete within your family to see who reaches the highest level/score during Languages Week.
- Watch a film in another language. If it is difficult to understand, offer advice on strategies for meaning making and keeping up with the subtitles.
- Share a memory of a trip to another country where you picked up words in the language, maybe a funny anecdote about a misunderstanding or a word that you found funny. Post your memory on the [Languages in the Mainstream Facebook](#) page.
- Adopt a word from another language and use it all the time among members of your family as a code.
- Show encouragement and that everyone can learn a language by enrolling in a language course that your child is learning at school. Visit the list of courses on offer in Western Australia from <http://mltawa.asn.au/litm/take-the-plunge/>

## Ideas for your workplace

- Survey staff about the languages they speak and report findings within and outside the organisation.
- Review your Reconciliation Action Plan. Is there inclusion of the language of Country on which your organisation is located?
- Set up a language competition within your workplace using a platform such as Duolingo.
- Create signage or badges that indicate the language skills of your employees, such as “Je parle Français”, “Parla Italiano” or with a flag indicating language spoken (such as in the airline industry).



## Ideas for the community

- Ask your favourite local restaurant to hold an immersion evening where a language other than English is spoken by staff and customers throughout the night, accompanied by music in the target language. French restaurant [P'tite Ardois](#) offers such immersion evenings.
- Ask your local library to establish a Living Library, where you can 'borrow' a person (rather than a book!) to teach you another language.
- Borrow a book from the [Community Languages Collection](#) through your local library and suggest/request other titles that the library could purchase for the collection.

# Benefits of knowing another language

Knowing how to speak in another language has economic, social and cultural benefits. Here are some people who have used their language skills in the workplace, at home and in the community.

## Collin Wiyoto Suryacitra



Collin Wiyoto Suryacitra speaks Indonesian, Javanese, English, is learning French, Spanish and Italian at UWA while also trying to improve his Mandarin on the side. Collin is studying a Bachelor of Arts majoring in Linguistics and French Studies. His love of communicating with people and getting to know their culture has made him passionate about learning languages. This has led him to many wonderful opportunities such as getting an internship at the Office of Multicultural Interests, delivering his own three-week English workshop in his hometown Malang, Indonesia as well as studying abroad in New Caledonia and France. Collin is hoping to become a language teacher and a children's book author and maybe work in the area of international relations and diplomacy in the future.

## Frances Dawson

Frances Dawson speaks Gooniyandi, Kriol and Standard Australian English. She teaches Gooniyandi, a critically endangered language to students at Yiyili Aboriginal Community School in the East Kimberley. Nowadays, in her community it is only the old people and some in their 40's who still speak Gooniyandi. It is no longer being spoken at home and children acquire Kriol as their first language. Frances is passionate about keeping Gooniyandi alive because the language is the holder of knowledge about the land, culture, history and people.



## Lewis Weeda



Lewis has grown up in a family that speaks other languages and so it always seemed natural for him to do so to. Lewis thinks that learning another language is a pathway to understanding different cultures and different perspectives on life. It is about enjoying diversity and resisting a mono-cultural view of the world. From Years 5 to 10 Lewis studied both French and Indonesian at school and now in Upper School he is still learning Indonesian. Travelling to Indonesia last year was an experience that highlighted to him the bridge that languages are to other people and towards understanding all people and each other's humanity. Lewis says "Once you speak another language you begin to understand that culture in a very real way. As you try to speak another's language that person sees that you view them as an equal." Lewis has also been travelling to the Kimberley and is sorry to see lost Indigenous languages and the negative effect this has on culture and identify. He also thinks it is just great fun to learn another language.

# What is Languages in the Mainstream?

Languages in the Mainstream involves the delivery of a series of public events throughout the year that promote language learning and will culminate in a revived, statewide acknowledgement and celebration of “Languages Week” from 7-14 August 2017. The benefits for the community include moving from a multilingual society – many language groups coexisting – to a plurilingual society – many language groups interacting with each other – to promote social cohesion, increased intercultural understanding and improved language and literacy skills among citizens.

For more information about Language Week and the Languages in the Mainstream Project visit [www.mltawa.asn.au](http://www.mltawa.asn.au)

## Voices in Harmony

Crank up a multicultural smorgasbord of song to celebrate Languages Week with the Office of Multicultural Interests' Voices in Harmony playlist.

This unique project features Western Australian artists representing some of the culturally and linguistically diverse (CaLD) communities in this State.

The playlist will take you on a musical journey around diverse WA with sounds from our Indigenous heritage before moving through to influences from Europe, the Middle East,

Africa, South Asia, South-East Asia, North Asia, South America and the Pacific Islands.

Listen online at the **Voices in Harmony** page on the OMI site.



## Fast facts about language in WA

- More than 10% of children in Western Australia speak a language other than English at home (CCYP Report, 2016).
- Research into bilingualism has shown that bilingual individuals tend to be creative & flexible thinkers, are innovative in finding solutions when problem solving (Baker, 1988), have greater communicative sensitivity (Ben-Zeev, 1977) and are more sensitive to the needs of listeners (Genesee, Tucker & Lambert, 1975).
- Fluency and literacy in the mother tongue lay a cognitive and linguistic foundation for learning additional languages (UNESCO, 2011) so we need to allow children to keep learning their mother tongue and give them the opportunity to be schooled in their mother tongue.
- Arabic, Auslan, Chinese, French, German, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Modern Greek, Noongar, and Spanish are currently offered as second language courses in Western Australian schools from K-10.
- Students in Year 11 and 12 have scope to study more languages as background speakers, such as Dutch, Turkish, Russian, Wajarri etc
- The Western Australian Curriculum and the Australian Curriculum state “Despite its status as a world language, a capability in English only is no longer sufficient. A bilingual or plurilingual capability is the norm in most parts of the world.”
- More than 250 Indigenous Australian language groups covered the continent at the time of European settlement in 1788. Today only around 120 of those languages are still spoken and many are at risk of being lost as Elders pass away” (AITSIS, <https://aiatsis.gov.au/explore/articles/indigenous-australian-languages>).
- Language learning and proficiency is valued by higher education institutions. For example most universities in Australia offer a 10% LOTE bonus to students who graduate with a language in year 12. In WA, 4 out of 5 universities offer this incentive.

## Tell us about your event

Don't forget to tell us what you did to celebrate Languages Week by uploading a photo or video and posting on our LITM Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/LitmWA/> with the hashtag **#livinglanguages** or **#lovinglanguages**



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