

Media Release
2 February 2007



Cultural exchange to promote education and settlement

ACL, the largest provider of high quality English language education and training programs in Australia, exchanged cultural values with delegates of the Japan Local Government Centre as part of a reception at Holroyd City Council this week.

ACL has been working since 1998 to educate and settle newly arrived migrants and refugees as part of the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP).

As the only language program of its kind in the world, the AMEP is hailed internationally for its contribution towards the successful settlement of migrants in Australia.

Thursday's (1 February) reception was part of the Japanese delegation's visit to Australia to study policies, programs and projects relating to migrant settlement issues, in particular, Council's Community Education Program.

ACL Group Managing Director Helen Zimmerman said ACL had supported Council's Program for a number of years and was a major partner in delivering the program to the community.

"The program is an excellent tool to highlight how Federal, State and Local Government work together and have different responsibilities in delivering a range of services to the community," Ms Zimmerman said.

"It helps our students to learn how they can make a difference by observing simple but important Council regulations and shows that they can voice their concerns and participate in helping the Council to improve the delivery of its services for the growth of the community.

"The program has received an international award and was selected by the Japan Local Government Centre as a model of best practice."

Council's program includes an introduction about how local government works and specifically about how councillors discuss and decide issues.

Ms Zimmerman said students from ACL's Parramatta College also attended the visit to the council chambers and participated in a mock council meeting.

"Our students see first-hand how issues in the community are discussed and decisions made. From this, they learn how to participate in this process."

ACL and its partners operate English language colleges at Parramatta, Auburn, Blacktown, Fairfield, Cabramatta, Ermington, Liverpool and Campbelltown as part of the Commonwealth Government's program to integrate refugees and newly arrived migrants in to the Australian community.

"ACL works actively to rebuild these people's lives and helps them to contribute to the culture and economy of Australia," Ms Zimmerman said.

There have been more than 76,000 enrolments of migrants and refugees learning English and receiving settlement assistance under ACL's AMEP program since 1998.

-ENDS-

For further information, contact Annette Madjarian, Media and Promotions Manager, ACL Pty Ltd, on 9025 4746 or 0412 554 872