

# Australian Council of State School Organisations Limited

*One voice for every child in public education*



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## Celebrating in Harmony

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Harmony Day is observed annually on 21 March in Australia. Harmony Day is intended to celebrate the cohesive and inclusive nature of Australia and promote a tolerant and culturally diverse society. Initially celebrated in 1999, Harmony Day coincides with the UN's International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, which was established in 1966. The Australian Council of State School Organisations (ACSSO) encourages school communities to take this time to reflect and celebrate the diversity of our nation, throughout the week

“Our country is diverse in many cultures; we have a rich blend of languages, foods, music, dance, tradition and faiths. Nowhere is that more evident than in our public schools, where they open their doors to all” stated Sharron Healy, President

“Our school playgrounds and classrooms are ideal places to celebrate these differences and develop a deep understanding and respect for the diversity. It should be embedded in daily practice and focused on today.

“Schools across the country are celebrating in many ways – through storytelling, cooking, sports, dance, (are) and sharing differences. Participating in Harmony Day gives school communities time to show cultural respect for everyone who has made Australia their home – from our first people to those who have come from the many lands around the world.

“We know school communities across Australia are taking the time throughout Harmony Week to share each other’s story; be inspired by the journey and celebrate the traditions. It’s a way we can learn and gain a greater understanding – to be inclusive” she concluded

Australia prides itself on being a multi-cultural society, with figures showing that nearly half of all Australians were born overseas, with the country seeing a high volume of migration every year. On top of this, more than 70 Indigenous languages are spoken in Australia and it has a very rich tribal heritage.

The continuing message of Harmony Day is 'Everybody Belongs' and its annual observance aims to encourage inclusiveness, respect and belonging for all Australians, regardless of cultural background, and celebrate core Australian values.

For further comment

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