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## Foreword

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Multicultural social policies in Australia have tended to gravitate between two opposing extremes, which in the past have seemed irreconcilable. On the one hand there has been a stress on the needs of minority communities to equip them with the linguistic skills and cultural knowledge so that their adjustment to the dominant societal values would be eased, and to bring about social justice, occupational mobility and educational equity for these minority groups. At the other extreme, multicultural policies have stressed the enrichment to the whole society through diversity and social pluralism. In education, multicultural policies have mirrored these emphases — occasionally stressing appropriate English language education, transitional bilingual programmes, bicultural aspects to curricula and facilitation of home-school relationships, thereby directly targeting immigrant and Aboriginal minorities and aiming to ensure educational equality for them. At other times, the stress has been on making available 'community' language programmes for all students, adding 'multicultural perspectives' across all curricula, and teaching history, Australian studies and social education generally from a pluralist perspective; in this way trying to construct a new version of Australian identity.

In recent years, a new emphasis has emerged which incorporates but transcends these two divergent tendencies. This new way of conceiving, 'naming' and talking about multicultural policies and their application to education reconciles the contradictory emphases of the past with a stress on the social and economic *functionalism* of cultural pluralism. In education, it is more common now to conceive of children's cultural and linguistic diversity not as a *problem* to be eradicated, nor necessarily as a *right* to be guaranteed, but rather, as a *resource* to be cultivated — an intellectual, social and economic resource. An essential part of this new way of viewing cultural and linguistic pluralism has to do with the construction of a vigorous and new national identity — no longer dependent and derivative but, at the same time, locally and internationally oriented.

In this respect, Australia is part of what will increasingly be a world-wide phenomenon; driven by the universalization of labour migration, increased

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economic interdependence among nations, the emergence of large trading blocs, greatly expanded international student mobility and the unification of the globe in a network of sophisticated, instantaneous telecommunications. Traditionally labour-exporting nations such as Italy and Greece are now immigrant-receiving nations, hosting hundreds of thousands of foreign-born workers; 'guest' workers in Northern Europe have 'stayed on', and their 'home countries' are now either in the EEC or have applied to join, and the provisions for bringing about the single European Market by 1993 would mean the free movement of labour. Japan's labour force now increasingly includes Pakistanis, Bangladeshis, Filipinos; many societies which previously regarded pluralism as a 'North American' phenomenon are having to acknowledge the issue. Race relations, pluralism, teaching national languages to domestic minorities, and cultural and linguistic preparation for international communication are on the agenda of many societies, developed and developing alike. Such changes have influenced the way in which second language learning in schools is regarded. Whereas only fifteen years ago the learning of languages in Australia (in a world then presumed by some to speak only English) was only rarely regarded as instrumentally useful, now language learning is advocated mostly in this way.

The Australian Advisory Council on Languages and Multicultural Education (AACLAME) has sought to invest considerations of cultural pluralism in Australian education with a more modern, some would say a more 'hard-nosed', economically rationalist dimension, without neglecting either the rights and opportunities of minorities or the benefits of culture to the wider society, but bringing these together into a broader discourse. The traditional mainstays of multicultural education, *viz* cultural and linguistic maintenance for minority groups, and their equal access to the socially dominant language, knowledge and values, could be revitalized by placing them in an overarching internationalist context and seeing the pluralism of our population as a resource enhancing Australia's capacity to participate in the world.

The programme which funded many of the innovations examined in this book was terminated in 1986 federal budget. The case studies in this extremely valuable book are eloquent testimony to the fact that Australian teachers and schools have been given an enormously difficult job to do, and, with only 'stop-start' and inadequate support, they have done it very well indeed. Serious problems of increasing the achievement levels of students, and the range and depth of language programmes — *i.e.*, problems of planning to service a multilingual, multicultural population (and this increasingly within an international orientation) persist.

The book documents that the process of innovation is a long and arduous one and that the society's ever increasing expectations of schools are not matched by the appropriate support for them. Despite this, very many Australian schools have embraced the principles of cultural pluralism and fashioned them into viable and imaginative curricula.

I commend the authors for the dedicated and systematic way they have

gone about their task, and assure them, and the schools which so generously gave of their time, that AACLAME is committed to addressing the issues they report to us — both to the OECD/CERI, of whose project on Education and Cultural and Linguistic Pluralism this research forms a part; and to the relevant Australian authorities.

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*Chair*

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