



AFMLTA Medal for Outstanding Service to Language Teaching: 2018 John Hajek

The AFMLTA Medal is awarded in recognition of exceptional and outstanding contributions to language teaching in Australia over an extended period. An exceptional and outstanding contribution is to be regarded as one that has significantly influenced the pattern and/or quality of language teaching and learning in Australia in some beneficial way.

Medal for Outstanding Service to Language Teaching Recipients

1992 Manuel Gelman (1st President AFMLTA)	1994 David Ingram
1999 Denis Cunningham	2005 Angela Scarino
2008 David Vale	2011 Joseph Lo Bianco
2011 Lia Tedesco	2013 Michael Clyne (posthumously)
2017 Jane Orton	2018 John Hajek

Citation

Professor John Hajek has a long and distinguished career as a languages educator, and has made exceptional and outstanding contributions to the field as a leader of languages education in Australia.

John was awarded his PhD from the University of Oxford, after completing his studies at the Universities of Melbourne, Florence and Padua, in the fields of arts, languages and linguistics. He is currently Professor of Italian and a linguist in the School of Languages and Linguistics at The University of Melbourne, and is Director of the Research Unit for Multilingualism and Cross-cultural Communication (RUMACCC). He was a founder of the Languages and Cultures Network of Australian Universities (LCNAU), as a recipient of a prestigious Office of Learning and Teaching (OLT) grant.

For RUMACCC, John continues the work of multilingualism pioneer Michael Clyne, reaching out to communities to promote their languages, and conducting research and providing assistance to communities to retain, maintain and strengthen community languages. This work extends to engagement in East Timor, with Sudanese and other minority language users, and communities with endangered languages. His work in this field alone has significantly influenced attitudes to languages and both the pattern and quality of languages education arising from government, educators' and policy-makers' decisions, shifting the monolingual mindset and bursting the anglobubble, with widespread recognition of his contributions for the benefit and value of a culturally and linguistically diverse nation.

For LCNAU, John has brought together teachers of languages in Australian universities in a networked community that now meets every year, shares research and teaching expertise, and acts as an advocate for languages teaching and learning. The establishment of an online portal of all languages programs available at Australian universities, to allow prospective students across the country to find a program right for them, is one of the outcomes of the early work of this now strong professional network.

John's many contributions to the professional engagement of teachers of languages in schools and universities; and to the learning of languages in pre-schools, primary and secondary schools, in universities and in community schools extends to numerous projects to promote languages education, and to advocate for the importance of language recognition nationally and internationally in the political arena. He has presented keynote plenaries throughout the world, including several at AFMLTA international conferences and notably the Horwood Address in 2017.

John's work with schools and teachers of languages in schools is extensive, including consultations with Education Services Australia on pre-school and early years languages programs, with AFMLTA, with education departments and governments across Australia, and, of critical importance, with individuals and groups of languages teachers. His willingness to share and collaborate, to engage and give unlimited time to the profession has had a profound effect on languages teaching over the past decade. He is currently engaged in a series of collaborations with community language schools, and has been active in the bilingual schools field, including for Italian-English schools as well as for bilingual pre-schools. His work on literacy in these areas informs the collaborations and programs adopted in the schools, as well as engaging local communities.

John's work in the school languages education space has led to development of new curricula, approaches to languages education, language teacher preparation, and community attitudes to learning languages and extending understanding and recognition of a plurilingual Australia. He has provided extensive professional learning sessions for teachers of languages, across all the states and territories of Australia.

In summary, Professor Hajek has made exceptional contributions to the languages education field in Australia, that clearly meet the criteria for the AFMLTA medal. These contributions span community, school and university programs, and involve work with students, teachers, schools, departments, government, industry and communities. We believe him to be a highly deserving recipient of this award.