

LANGUAGES EDUCATION IN AUSTRALIA

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AUSTRALIA ASIA ENDEAVOUR AWARDS

2020 Summit: Prime Minister's Australia Asia Endeavour Awards

Hon Julia Gillard MP, Minister for Education, 23 April 2009

The 2020 Summit, the Youth Summit and the Schools Summit all recognised the importance of Australia being an Asia-literate country.

In response to this the Government is committing \$14.9m over four years to deliver a new scholarship scheme: the Prime Minister's Australia Asia Endeavour Awards.

This commitment builds on the Rudd Government's \$62.4 million National Asian Languages and Studies in Schools program.

Forty scholarships will be awarded annually to Australian university students, twenty at undergraduate level and twenty at postgraduate level.

The scholarships will allow the recipients to undertake one year of study in Asia, which can be followed by an internship or work placement also in Asia.

Read entire release: http://www.deewr.gov.au/Ministers/Gillard/Media/Releases/Pages/Article_090423_092319.aspx

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BUILDING THE LANGUAGES EDUCATION REVOLUTION

Science and Language Centres for 21st Century Secondary Schools (SLC)

The Science/Languages Centres initiative provides secondary schools with a unique opportunity to create learning environments to meet today's needs and challenges. Language centres will be built to equip our leaders of tomorrow with essential skills and study in languages of our key regional neighbours and beyond.

This element of Building the Education Revolution will be a highly beneficial initiative to encourage and support students to gain and develop language proficiency right through their secondary education - and we encourage all eligible schools to submit proposals.

It is the responsibility of the Relevant Education Authorities (REAs) to manage the application process in the first instance. Schools are encouraged to speak to their REAs about any application. A full list of REA contacts is available at www.buildingtheeducationrevolution.gov.au.

REAs will conduct a competitive process seeking expressions of interest from secondary schools within their sector. They will then submit a prioritised short-list of projects for funding to the Commonwealth according to the following criteria:

1. Demonstrated need or disadvantage—need demonstrated by providing relevant evidence (quantitative and qualitative) to establish disadvantaged schools and school communities.
2. Demonstrated need for the specified building —the school does not have a contemporary science building/laboratory or a language learning centre, or any existing facilities of that kind or they are inadequate for the school's current or emerging needs.
3. Demonstrated readiness and capacity to begin and complete construction of the building within the 2009–10 financial year.

A National Assessment Panel (NAP) will assess applications against the assessment criteria. NAP recommendations will go to the Minister for Education, to make the final decisions about successful applications and the final funding amount.

Applications for Science and/or Language Labs will close on 31 May with announcements of successful funding recipients expected in June. This will be the only round for SLC.

More information: <http://www.buildingtheeducationrevolution.gov.au> .

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INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES & CULTURE

Women in front line of language preservation

Gail Liston, The Australian, April 08, 2009

SPURRED on by the critical need to halt the loss of endemic indigenous languages across Australia, academics at the Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education in the Northern Territory are finding themselves involved in a front-line offensive.

Of the 250 traditional languages once spoken on this continent as recently as 100 years ago, there are now only 20 to 30 considered healthy, viable and likely to survive, according to Jeanie Bell, lecturer at the institute's Centre for Australian Languages and Linguistics.

She acknowledges that increased support for documenting language will come from the women and younger people in the communities; however, it is not always easy to maintain their interest.

Bell says the institute is training indigenous people to work on their own languages and help others in the communities keep them alive. "This is groundbreaking work but it takes time and commitment," she adds.

Bell says most of the language revival work is initiated by Aboriginal women, who are dedicated to the cause and often become trained linguists, language workers or community researchers. These women are also language activists on behalf of their communities and regularly work with non-indigenous linguists.

Read entire article: <http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,25197,25305162-12332,00.html>

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Music Outback Foundation

Promoting music, language and culture with indigenous communities

Music Outback Foundation Limited is dedicated to the use of music and related art forms as a means of improving outcomes for remote Indigenous communities.

Australian Indigenous people are faced with the fragmentation of their culture, with disturbingly low outcomes in health, education, employment, and other community indicators.

Through careful development of its programs over six years, Music Outback has shown that music can be a powerful and effective multi-faceted vehicle for the reconnection of Indigenous people to their own cultural expression.

At the same time, music can effectively address serious needs in areas such as education, health, language preservation, and remote Indigenous employment.

In its language preservation work, Music Outback teams work with linguists and community members to record traditional stories in language and develop them into first language contemporary songs. This process has proven to be very exciting for community elders who are the custodians of these stories, as otherwise they often find it difficult to interest young people in this aspect of their culture.

Find out more: <http://www.musicoutback.com.au/index.html>

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Puzzle show sharpens indigenous kids' skills in spelling and grammar

Sally Jackson, The Australian, March 30, 2009

HOW to get children to willingly practise spelling and grammar? Put it on television, offer prizes and make it a gameshow.

That's the idea behind Letterbox, a TV program created to improve core language skills among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander kids, which will premiere mid-year on National Indigenous Television.

Taping of the first series finished this month in record time, with 100 half-hour episodes, or 20 weeks' worth, done in just 11 days.

The 60 players -- 10-12-year-olds representing schools across southeast Queensland -- raced the clock to complete spelling, grammar and comprehension puzzles on computer touchscreens for prizes including Macquarie Dictionary packs, iPod nanos and a plaque.

Read entire article: <http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/business/story/0,,25259995-7582,00.html>

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NEWS FROM HERE & THERE

France: Touch Helps Make The Connection Between Sight And Hearing

ScienceDaily, Mar. 25, 2009

The sense of touch allows us to make a better connection between sight and hearing and therefore helps adults to learn to read.

These results, published March 16th in the journal PLoS One, should improve learning methods, both for children learning to read and adults learning foreign languages.

To read words that are new to us, we have to learn to associate a visual stimulus (a letter, or grapheme) with its corresponding auditory stimulus (the sound, or phoneme).

When visual stimuli can be explored both visually and by touch, adults learn arbitrary associations between auditory and visual stimuli more efficiently.

The researchers reached this conclusion from an experiment on thirty French-speaking adults.

Read article and notes at: <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2009/03/090318112937.htm>

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France: French jeer as Sarkozy mangles language

Charles Bremner, Marie Tourres, Paris, The Australian, March 25, 2009 [article from UK Times]

PRESIDENTS of the French Republic do not start speeches by saying: "To everyone who's important here, bonjour."

They also conjugate their verbs and use pronouns correctly -- or at least they did before Nicolas Sarkozy came on the scene.

As Paris marks the annual "Week of the French Language", the straight-talking President has upset teachers and purists with his fondness for sounding like a matey, ordinary bloke.

Mr. Sarkozy's habit of playing fast and loose with the French language helped to get him elected in 2007, but it is now feeding his image as a Philistine.

Read more at <http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,,25237068-26040,00.html>

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USA: Maryland Tackles Ways to Tap Into 'Heritage' Languages:

Dual-Language Classes, Teacher Certification are Areas Under Pursuit

Mary Ann Zehr, Edweek, 10 March 2009

While other states have enacted policies to discourage students from building on their native-language skills, Maryland has completed an audit of the opportunities the state has to leverage the "heritage language" skills of its residents.

Heritage speakers have been exposed to or speak a language other than English at home.

The Task Force for the Preservation of Heritage Language Skills, which was established by the Maryland General Assembly last year, presented a report to Gov. Martin O'Malley and the legislature Feb. 26 with recommendations for how the state can better support the use of native languages other than English.

"We know these folks are important to us, and we don't want these language skills to go away—and without intervention, they will," said Catherine W. Ingold, the director of the National Foreign Language Center, a research institute at the University of Maryland, and the chairwoman of the 20-member task force.

Senator Rosapepe said: "The foreign-language strategy of schools is oriented toward a handful of European languages that are in declining use around the world, instead of being focused on the real diversity of languages in the world and of heritage people in the United States."

Read entire article: <http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2009/03/11/24heritage.h28.html?tmp=1238247447>

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USA: Indiana Kindergartners can learn Mandarin

Indystar.com, April 18, 2009

The International School of Indiana is introducing a Mandarin language immersion program, the first of its kind in the state, the school announced. The program will be offered at the kindergarten level, according to Angie Dye Nemeth, a spokeswoman for the school.

The new program was designed to be a significant addition to the school's existing Spanish and French immersion programs and to reinforce the school's commitment to engaging Indiana in the global economy.

Read article – and online comments - <http://www.indystar.com/article/20090418/LOCAL/904180465/1013/NEWS04>

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USA: Justices get AZ bilingual case today

Arizona Daily Star, 20 April 2009

On paper, the issue the U.S. Supreme Court will take up today is simple: Should Arizona lawmakers be forced to spend hundreds of millions of dollars to comply with a judge's ruling that they do more to ensure students learn English.

But what the court rules in the case that has been dragging through the legal system for the last 17 years is giving a host of outside groups a forum to push their own agendas. These range from a debate on the merit of settling lawsuits with consent decrees to an attack on bilingual education as dividing the nation.

If nothing else, the decision due this summer could redefine states' rights versus federal authority.

Today's hearing follows rulings by a trial judge and the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals that Arizona is not complying with federal laws requiring states to "take appropriate action to overcome language barriers that impede equal participation by its students in its instructional programs."

Read more at <http://www.azstarnet.com/dailystar/289407>

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CONFERENCES & EVENTS

Victorian State Conference for German Teachers "Wandel ohne Grenzen"

12-13 September 2009, Four Points by Sheraton, Geelong, Victoria

Conference call for papers and registrations are now online: visit the website:

<http://www.goethe.de/ins/au/lp/ver/vme/en4278078v.htm>

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Second Language Research Forum (SLRF) Conference:

"Diverse contributions to SLA: Integrating the parts of a greater whole"

29 October 29-1 November 2009: Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI. USA

This annual conference aims to create a forum for the presentation and discussion of research in second language acquisition from a variety of subfields including, but not limited to: theoretical linguistics, sociolinguistics, anthropology, cognitive science, psychology, and educational science.

SLRF 2009 asks how these varied methodologies and approaches compose a single field of SLA.

We solicit papers, posters, and colloquia that address this question and that add to our understanding of SLA.

Plenary Speakers:

- Dr. Robert DeKeyser, University of Maryland
- Dr. Susan Gass, Michigan State University
- Dr. Jim Lantolf, Penn State University
- Dr. Bonnie Schwartz, University of Hawaii

SLRF 2009 offers two workshops and three colloquia (one invited and two refereed). The invited colloquium will be organized by Dr. Shawn Loewen, MSU. We invite submissions for the other two colloquia.

Please direct any questions to the SLRF 2009 organizing committee at slrf2009@msu.edu, or view the conference website: <http://sls.msu.edu/slrf09>

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REMINDERS

1 May - Victorian Association of Teachers of Italian Annual Congress - Preston, VIC - <http://www.vati.vic.edu.au/congress.html>

28-30 May - International Conference on Minority Languages - Tartu, Estonia - <http://www.icml.ut.ee>

28-30 May - International Conference on Language Teacher Education - Washington DC, USA - <http://www.nclrc.org/lte2009/>

23-26 June - International Association for Improvement of Mother Tongue Education - Toronto, Canada - <http://www.ilo.uva.nl/Projecten/Gert/iaimte/default.html>

9-12 July - AFMLTA National Conference 2009 - Sydney NSW - <http://www.mltansw.asn.au/afmltadetails.htm>

14-15 July - Australian Society of Indonesian Language Educators Conference - Waverley, NSW - <http://mltansw.asn.au/asiletheme.htm>

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ACSSO EMAIL NEWSLETTERS

- Australian Education Digest : <http://www.acsso.org.au/aed.htm> (weekly)
- International News Roundup : <http://www.acsso.org.au/roundup.htm> (monthly)
- Values Education : <http://www.valuesineducation.org.au/news.htm> (monthly)
- Languages Education : <http://www.languageseducation.com/news.htm> (monthly)
- Ensemble - Music Education : <http://www.ensemble.org.au/news.htm> (monthly)
- Public Education Voice : <http://www.acsso.org.au/pev.htm> (quarterly)
- Family School Partners : http://www.familyschool.org.au/?page_id=6 (quarterly)

Do you know of an event or resource that schools should know about? Email us at letters@acsso.org.au

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