

## LANGUAGES EDUCATION IN AUSTRALIA

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- [A PRIORITY - ENGAGING WITH ASIA: \(10 items\)](#)
- [ENDEAVOUR LANGUAGE TEACHER FELLOWSHIPS: applications close 29 May](#)
- [PRIME MINISTER'S AUSTRALIA ASIA ENDEAVOUR AWARDS: applications now open](#)
- [INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES: \(3 items\)](#)
- [OPINION: Doggedly monolingual](#)
- [RESOURCES: \(2 items\)](#)
- [BUILDING THE LANGUAGES EDUCATION REVOLUTION: applications close 31 May](#)
- [NEWS FROM HERE AND THERE: \(6 items\)](#)
- [CONFERENCES & EVENTS: Weekend Italiano "A Tavola"](#)
- [REMINDERS](#)
- [ACSSO EMAIL NEWSLETTERS](#)

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### A PRIORITY - ENGAGING WITH ASIA

#### Becoming Asia Literate - Grants to Schools

*First round of grants is now open – applications closing 29 May 2009*

The first of three rounds of the Becoming Asia Literate: Grants to Schools opened online on Monday 4 May 2009.

The Grants will enable schools to undertake innovative school-based initiatives that support the teaching and learning of Asian languages and/or studies of Asia related to one or more of the key focus countries: China, Indonesia, Japan and Korea.

In 2009, \$900,000 will be provided to schools under this initiative. Schools can apply for grants of \$20 000 (individual school) and up to \$40 000 (cluster).

The application process for the Becoming Asia Literate: Grants to Schools is an online process. Go to <http://www.asiaeducation.edu.au> : In the box about the Grants to School is a 'click here' button that takes you to a page that has the information pack – you are advised to read this information carefully and the application form that is also located there.

*Applications close Friday 29 May 2009 at 5pm Eastern Standard Time.*

[< top >](#)

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### Government promotes the study of Asian languages in schools

*Hon Julia Gillard MP, Minister for Education, 4 May 2009*

The Minister for Education, Julia Gillard, today invited primary and secondary schools to apply for grants under the \$6.24 million Becoming Asia Literate: Grants to Schools program which opens today.

Becoming Asia Literate: Grants to Schools is part of the Rudd Government's \$62.4 million National Asian Languages and Studies in Schools Program (NALSSP).

The program will be managed by the Asia Education Foundation and will provide \$6.24 million in direct grants to primary and secondary schools between 2009 and 2011.

The Minister also announced the membership of a new reference group to oversee the implementation of the National Asian Languages and Studies in Schools Program (NALSSP).

For more information about the NALSSP, visit <http://www.deewr.gov.au/schooling/NALSSP>

Read entire release: <http://tinyurl.com/d84tkl>

[< top >](#)

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## **New alliance formed to push Asian languages and study**

*Miki Perkins, The Age, May 5, 2009*

A powerful alliance of business groups, unions and corporations is calling for a greater educational focus on Asia.

"Once we come out of this economic downturn Australia will look to Asia as a core driver of our own recovery," Australian Industry Group head Heather Ridout said. "Understanding Asia, knowing the languages, cultures and traditions and teaching our children about our near neighbours is essential for future prosperity."

The Business Alliance for Asia Literacy is a coalition of 60 associations and corporations

Only 3 per cent of students are studying an Asian language at university. Just 12 per cent of year 12 students study a foreign language, and only half of those choose an Asian language.

The alliance has called on schools and state and federal governments to ensure that education in Asian knowledge and languages is core to the Australian curriculum.

Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/q4tsan>

[< top >](#)

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## **Study of Asia currently fails our need to know**

*Rowan Callick, The Australian, May 06, 2009*

MANY of Australia's biggest companies and leading business groups have established the Business Alliance for Asia Literacy, which Australian Industry Group chief executive Heather Ridout launched yesterday.

"Asia is becoming more important. Within 10 years it will have three of the four largest economies in the world," the alliance says, yet the number of Australian students involved in Asian studies at schools and universities is tiny..

Across the country, for instance, 87,000 school students learn Chinese but by year 12 almost all have dropped out, leaving just 240 not from Chinese backgrounds.

The alliance includes the Business Council of Australia, the ACTU, the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, ANZ, Bluescope Steel, the Commonwealth Bank, IBM Australia, Macquarie Group, Qantas, Santos, Toll Group, Wesfarmers and Westpac.

Read entire article: <http://tinyurl.com/raoss3>

[< top >](#)

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## **Launch of Business Alliance**

*ABC News coverage 5 May 2009*

View footage at: <http://tinyurl.com/qfzr2x>

[< top >](#)

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## **Why push for greater Asian literacy makes sense**

*SBS, 5 May 2009*

The future centre of global economic growth is right at our doorstep. More than 60 Australian companies and business associations think so – and have banded together with the trade union movement to create a new Business Alliance for Asia Literacy.

The Australian Industry Group is a key member and its head Heather Ridout tells Caroline Davey why her organisation decided to join the alliance to push for our schools and universities to offer more Asian history, geography and languages in their curriculum.

Access the podcast at: <http://tinyurl.com/pab6qa>

[< top >](#)

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## **Asian languages and studies matter to the future of every young Australian**

*ABC interview with Kathe Kirby, Executive Director of the Asia Education Foundation*

Access the podcast at: <http://tinyurl.com/oyx9uo>

[< top >](#)

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## **Report on Studies of Asia in Year 12**

The AEF commissioned the Australian Council of Educational Research to investigate the extent to which students completed Year 12 subjects with content or focus on Asia using a sample of predominantly tertiary entrance subjects that included: English, History, Geography, International Studies, Politics, and Arts.

The Report, written by Jenny Wilkinson and Gina Milgate, and published in April 2009, primarily found that "... across Australia it is only a small minority of students who undertake studies with content or focus on Asia."

Download report at: <http://tinyurl.com/qmun9a>

[< top >](#)

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## **Monoglot graduates face a bleak future**

*Miki Perkins, The Age, May 6, 2009*

Language experts, teachers and policy makers say Asian languages in Australia are in crisis: we're becoming a staunchly monolingual nation in an era when much of the globe is flexing its multilingual muscle. And unless Australia halts this decline, they warn, the educational, economic and security consequences will be dire.

"If we don't focus on Asia literacy, both language and cultural awareness, we're going to get left behind," says Kathe Kirby, executive director of Asialink and the Asia Education Foundation. "The prosperity, security, and capacity of our children to operate in an internationally mobile world will be severely affected."

Travel bans, a funding drought and the spectre of fundamentalist Islam have all hamstrung efforts to reinvigorate Asian language learning.

Monoglot graduates face a bleak future. Kirby points out it is common — particularly in developing Asian nations — for emerging students to be trilingual. Mandarin is now the most widely spoken language in the world. By the middle of this century, Hindi, and its closely related counterpart Urdu, are tipped to rival both English and Spanish as the second most widely spoken native languages.

Read entire article: <http://tinyurl.com/pgy8sa>

[< top >](#)

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## **Teaching foreign languages**

Victoria University has cut all its foreign language courses except Vietnamese. So what signal does this send to those who believe we don't put enough effort into teaching second languages? The Australian Council of State School Organisations wants 2009 to be the year of languages.

Should foreign languages be core curriculum especially in primary schools? And should we focus on Asian languages or will any second language do?

Paul Barclay discusses the issues with:

- Angela Scarino, Associate Professor of Applied Linguistics and Director Research Centre for Languages and Culture, University of South Australia
- Kathe Kirby, Executive Director, Asia Education Foundation
- Norm Hart, President Australian Government Primary Principals' Association

Download audio at <http://tinyurl.com/q8hsub>

[< top >](#)

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## **ENDEAVOUR LANGUAGE TEACHER FELLOWSHIPS 2010**

### **Applications now open**

The Endeavour Language Teacher Fellowships (ELTF) offer opportunities to practising and to trainee (pre-service) languages teachers to improve their language proficiency and cultural knowledge through intensive, short-term study programs. The Asia Education Foundation (AEF) manages the ELTF program on behalf of the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment, and Workplace Relations (DEEWR).

The 2010 ELTF study programs will take place over three weeks from late December 2009.

Programs will be offered for practising teachers of Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Spanish, and Bahasa Indonesia in Jordan, China, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Korea, Spain, and Darwin respectively.

Trainee teachers are eligible to apply for the study programs in Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, Korean and Bahasa Indonesia.

Applications close on Friday 29 May 2009.

For further information, and to download an application pack, go to <http://tinyurl.com/osv3d5>

[< top >](#)

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## **Group Leaders - 2010 Endeavour Language Teacher Fellowships**

### *Applications now open*

In conjunction to ELTF Awards applications, the AEF is seeking 'Expressions of Interest' for Group Leaders for the 2010 ELTF study programs, specifically: Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Spanish, and Bahasa Indonesia in Jordan, China, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Korea, Spain, and Darwin respectively.

Information on these Group Leader roles and how to apply is available upon request from Ms Sophie Howlett, Project Manager: <mailto:s.howlett@asialink.unimelb.edu.au>.

[< top >](#)

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## **PRIME MINISTER'S AUSTRALIA ASIA ENDEAVOUR AWARDS**

### **New Australia Asia Endeavour Awards scheme – applications now open**

*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.

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.

Ten scholarships will also be awarded to the top international Endeavour Postgraduate Awards scholars at PhD level from the priority Asian countries each year to study in Australia, with a maximum of two for any one country.

In the first three program years the following countries have been identified as priorities for both incoming and outgoing scholars: China (including Hong Kong and Macau SARs); India; Indonesia; Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, Republic of Korea, Taiwan, Thailand and Vietnam.

Read entire release: <http://tinyurl.com/qsngk7>

*Applications are now open and will close on 31 July 2009*

Details and application forms at: <http://www.endeavour.deewr.gov.au/>

[< top >](#)

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## **INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES**

### **Beyond black and white**

*Alison Anderson, The Australian, May 20, 2009*

TODAY the Northern Territory Government will release Working Future, a strategic direction for the remote towns and communities of the territory.

To this point in our history, difference has defined the NT: black and white; urban and remote; opportunity and disadvantage; development and poverty; independent spirit and protectionist policies.

As a traditional Aboriginal woman from a remote territory community, I live with difference. My languages are not those of Europe but of the desert. My cultural laws and practice are secret and unchanging; so unlike the laws born of Westminster.

This difference is at the heart of the NT's conflicted history. It is our unique strength and our Achilles heel.

The survival of my people's law, culture and language is maintained through the constant affirmation of difference.

Read entire article: <http://tinyurl.com/puu9ag>

*Alison Anderson is the NT Environment, Arts and Indigenous Affairs Minister.*

[< top >](#)

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## **Charting the soul**

*Natasha Robinson, The Australian, May 02, 2009*

From a childhood rich with country music and Tamworth talent quests, Emma Donovan, 27, has matured into a diva with a powerful voice, who blends country, gospel, soul and reggae.

Her career as a professional musician began with the all-female Aboriginal acoustic outfit the Stiff Gins. A regular on the festival circuit, she has toured with the indigenous group the Black Arm Band and is due to release an EP this month following the release of her debut solo album, *Changes*, in 2004.

Donovan's grandfather Micko Donovan spoke the Gumbayngirr language, which had almost died out among the Aboriginal population in the Nambucca Valley. Donovan, who is learning to speak the language and incorporates it into her songs, has been using video recordings of her grandfather speaking in Gumbayngirr to help in her studies.

"I remember little things that my grandfather used to say (in Gumbayngirr)," Donovan says. "I've really tried hard to keep it in my songs.

"I think it's important that the language exists; if it's still alive, why can't we sing it, why can't we talk it and live it? It's only two to three generations away from when it used to be spoken. I've got some footage and I've been listening to a lot of recordings of my grandfather, my great grandmother and great grandfather. And a lot of the elders up there speak it really fluently now. They're there at the language centre every day of the week. Some of them have had it for years, but just haven't spoken it. And some of them are learning it now through the centre and through other people, and it's kind of all coming back to them."

Emma Donovan's album *Ngarraanga* (Remember) was released on May 15.

Read entire article: <http://tinyurl.com/qmpua7>

[< top >](#)

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## **Ovation for film that crosses language barriers**

*Stephanie Bunbury, Sydney Morning Herald, May 18, 2009*

The audience gave a five-minute standing ovation to Australian director Warwick Thornton and his cast after *Samson & Delilah* screened at the Cannes Film Festival at the weekend. "It was interesting, because there was a whole mob of 'Thank you for making that film'," Thornton said. "That's bizarre, to thank you for making a film."

*Samson & Delilah*, which won the audience award at the Adelaide Film Festival this year and has opened strongly in Australian arthouse cinemas, is not easy viewing. It tells the harrowing but redemptive story of two indigenous teenagers who are driven out of their remote community and slip into poverty and substance abuse. "Every shot," according to the review in the influential entertainment trade newspaper *Variety*, "imparts plot and character information with simplicity and intelligence."

In Cannes it screened in the festival's Un Certain Regard section, which emphasises works by directors with a strong personal vision. The film screened twice on Saturday to packed houses. At a cocktail party that night Thornton described his "beautiful day".

"I woke up in the morning and said to myself 'Today is the beginning of the rest of my life, whether they like my film or not'. But they liked it, which was amazing. Because you don't know. Today was a complete validation of the film's ability to cross oceans and transcend language barriers."

Read entire article: <http://tinyurl.com/qz4o6a>

[< top >](#)

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## **OPINION**

### **Doggedly monolingual**

*Letter to Editor, The Australian, May 20, 2009*

TWO crucial but often overlooked factors - parental attitudes and school timetabling - at least get a mention in Rowan Callick's article ("Study of Asia fails our need to know", HES, May 6). But neither get more than token challenges, thereby underlining our repeated failures in foreign language learning and teaching.

That "take-up of Asian languages ... was limited by low demand from parents, students and the community" is a nicer way of saying, "Why should my Leslie or Robin waste time learning wog-speak?" Failure to face this, let alone deal with it, has undermined every grand scheme in this area of learning.

The other roadblock is in how language learning is blocked in school timetabling, with languages - as the Asia Education Foundation director Kathe Kirby points out - "usually limited to just two lessons of 40 minutes a week".

Babies don't learn their mother tongues like this, nor do musicians and sports champions attain their peaks with those sorts of skill acquisition regimes. In most schools, heads of languages departments are usually at the end of the timetabling requests queue; that is, if they can find it at all.

### **Leonard Colquhoun**

*Invermay, Tasmania*

[< top >](#)

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## **RESOURCES**

### **New resources to enhance language teaching in schools**

*Hon Julia Gillard MP, Minister for Education, 1 May 2009*

The Minister for Education, Julia Gillard, today released Teaching and Learning Languages: A Guide which will support teachers in delivering quality language education programs in Australian schools.

The Guide is a significant new resource for teachers, schools and communities which can be used to create inspiring language learning environments.

The Guide was prepared by The University of South Australia's Research Centre for Languages and Cultures with funding of \$277 000 from the Australian Government's School Languages Program.

The Guide represents a key part of the Australian Government's commitment to supporting teachers in delivering quality language education programs for all young Australians.

The Guide and its online support materials are available at [www.tllg.unisa.edu.au](http://www.tllg.unisa.edu.au)

Read more at: <http://tinyurl.com/pws3kc>

[< top >](#)

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### **South Pacific Languages in Documentary Compilations**

Australian film-makers Juniper Films are releasing a series of DVD compilations of their documentary films made from the 1970s to more recent years.

Samoana, a co-production with the Government of Samoa, recounts events and people of Samoa's history in its 3,000 years of settlement. The DVD has both English and Samoan language versions.

Fiji, the Lands and the Legends is a DVD compilation of seven sections featuring the islands from various Juniper films and series, including the traditional ceremony for the installation of a paramount chief on the island of Gau.

Read more at: <http://www.juniperfilms.com/>

[< top >](#)

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## **BUILDING THE LANGUAGES EDUCATION REVOLUTION**

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

*Get your proposals in by 31 May for that languages lab you really need!*

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 should speak to their REAs about any application. A full list of REA contacts is available: see link below..

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>

[< top >](#)

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## **NEWS FROM HERE AND THERE**

### **Dead language rises again thanks to scholar's bequest**

*Alistair Jones, The Australian, May 16, 2009*

Job advertisements are set to go out for a new position as a Latin lecturer at the University of New England in Armidale, NSW. According to Oxford-educated professor Lynda Garland, who heads the school of humanities at UNE, the university would like to fill the position in time for the second semester this year.

The job is the Charles Tesoriero Lectureship, a teaching role made possible by a generous bequest in the will of Charles Tesoriero, a popular classics lecturer at UNE from 2001 until 2005. When Tesoriero died by his own hand in 2005, aged 32, he left \$1 million each to UNE and the University of Sydney to set up lectureships that would continue to advance his enthusiasm for Latin language and literature.

Read entire article: <http://tinyurl.com/olv7kh>

[< top >](#)

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## **Latin lovers**

*Jane Cafarella & Elisabeth Tarica, The Age, May 18, 2009*

Melbourne Girls Grammar, in South Yarra, is one of only a handful of schools in Victoria that offer Latin — a tradition that has endured at the school despite the introduction of modern languages over the years. And the classical language isn't just hanging on. Paola Malatesta, head of Languages Other Than English (LOTE) at the school, says Latin is the most popular year 9 language there.

Over at Alia College, a tiny alternative school with only 60 students in Hawthorn East, Latin is also the most successful LOTE subject. Principal, school founder and Latin teacher Bob Morgan says: "Even when the course wasn't well developed (the students) were still choosing Latin. Now it is much more organised, they are totally choosing it."

For a language famously dismissed long ago as "dead" — and which many associate with musty schoolmasters and the painful rote learning of verbs — Latin shows no sign of falling into a linguistic grave. The number of VCE students studying Latin in Victoria, for example, is on the rise — from 105 in 1998 to 165 in 2009. Two-thirds of these are boys.

Read entire article: <http://tinyurl.com/o25c67>

[< top >](#)

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## **Epitelos! Modern Greek returns**

*Elisabeth Tarica, The Age, May 18, 2009*

Australia's universities have become tongue-tied over the past decade, with the number of languages on offer falling from 66 to 29 and demand for those courses falling.

Now, in a small step against the tide, modern Greek will make a comeback to Monash University after a 10-year hiatus. The move brings Monash in line with major Victorian universities such as La Trobe, which is the main institution teaching modern Greek in Victoria.

Evangelia Anagnostou-Laoutides, from Monash's classical studies department, says a 2½ year push from the Monash Hellenic Student Society prompted the move.

She says the course, which begins next year, will be funded by the Greek Government to promote the language in the Greek-Australian community. Melbourne is home to the biggest Greek-speaking population outside Greece — with almost 47 per cent of Greek Australians living in Melbourne.

Read entire article: <http://tinyurl.com/p4a6lm>

[< top >](#)

---

## **Kids' book reaches out to Timorese**

*Miki Perkins, The Age, May 13, 2009*

IT WAS an unlikely meeting of worlds: an Australian children's book read out in Tetum, the national language of East Timor, amid the colonial grandeur of Victoria's Government House.

The words - rendered into English for the benefit of the audience by a translator - were from a special edition of Australian author Mem Fox's *Whoever You Are*, which was launched yesterday and is the first Australian children's book to be translated into Tetum.

A joint project between the Aloia Foundation, headed by Ms Sword Gusmao, and the National Education and Employment Foundation, the book is designed to encourage a love of reading in East Timor, where about 60 per cent of adults are illiterate.

Read entire article: <http://tinyurl.com/ohd27h>

[< top >](#)

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## **USA: Need for learning another language**

*Sharmeen Gangat, Gotham Gazette (NY) April 2009*

President Barack Obama has admitted he feels chagrined that he can't speak another language.

"It's embarrassing when Europeans come over here, they all speak English, they speak French, they speak German. And then we go over to Europe and all we can say is merci beaucoup, right?" Obama said at a town hall meeting last July.

While campaigning for president, Obama said he thought all American students should learn another language. Now that he has taken office, though, his push for foreign language instruction has faded.

"His [Obama's] failure to include language learning in his education policy statement is regrettable," said Bret Lovejoy, executive director of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages. Foreign language education is particularly important in New York City, Lovejoy said, because of the city's role in commerce, finance, culture and entertainment.

Read entire article: <http://tinyurl.com/c65s9t>

[< top >](#)

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## **USA: TED's Open Translation Project brings subtitles in 40+ languages to TED.com**

*NEW YORK, May 13, 2009*

The acclaimed 18-minute talks available free on the TED website will now be accessible beyond the English-speaking world, through the TED Open Translation Project (<http://www.ted.com/translation>), which launches today, generously sponsored by Nokia.

A year in the making, the project offers video subtitles, time-coded transcripts and the ability for volunteers worldwide to translate any talk into any language.

The project launches with 300 translations in 40 languages; more than 200 volunteer translators have already contributed.

Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/pz8v4g>

[< top >](#)

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## **CONFERENCES & EVENTS**

### **Weekend Italiano “A Tavola”**

*Sydney 23/24 May – Melbourne 22/23 August*

Parla italiano at the dining table! In Italian households, La tavola is the most treasured piece of furniture for two favourite activities that take place daily around it: eating and talking. Combining the two, ‘A TAVOLA’ – literally ‘at the table’ – will be the theme for Weekend Italiano Autumn 2009.

Blending hands-on workshops with the cultural history of food and etiquette, Weekend Italiano A TAVOLA will improve your language skills as well as your culinary expertise. Attend Saturday, Sunday, or the whole weekend to experience a new series of workshops ranging from Gnocchi-making to Food through art; from Agriturismo to The art of coffee, that will enable you to experience Italian life A TAVOLA. You will make some traditional Italian dishes, set a formal dining table and learn how to choose the best restaurant in town – all of this of course parlando italiano!

The new programme will offer more in-depth and structured communicative activities. Weekend Italiano A TAVOLA caters to beginners, advanced, and lower and upper intermediate speakers, with each level adapting vocabulary and grammatical structures to students’ abilities.

Once again, gourmet lunches – prepared by selected chefs – will provide insight into Italian culture, history and traditions.

- Sydney: Saturday 23 - Sunday 24 May, North Sydney Community Centre
- Melbourne: Saturday 22 - Sunday 23 August, Co.As.It

Info, packages and bookings: <http://tinyurl.com/pt6x9j>

[< top >](#)

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## **REMINDERS**

28-30 May - International Conference on Minority Languages - Tartu, Estonia - <http://tinyurl.com/qcp39d>

28-30 May - International Conference on Language Teacher Education - Washington DC, USA - <http://tinyurl.com/oj678o>

23-26 June - International Association for Improvement of Mother Tongue Education - Toronto, Canada - <http://tinyurl.com/o7zbcg>

9-12 July - AFMLTA National Conference 2009 - Sydney, NSW - <http://tinyurl.com/qpxy4w>

14-15 July - Australian Society of Indonesian Language Educators Conference - Waverley, NSW - <http://tinyurl.com/qxkqpn>

12-13 September - Victorian State Conference for German Teachers - Geelong, VIC - <http://tinyurl.com/obudjn>

29 October-1 November - Second Language Research Forum Conference - Michigan State University, USA - <http://tinyurl.com/r4llc3>

[< top >](#)

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## ACSSO EMAIL NEWSLETTERS

- Australian Education Digest : <http://tinyurl.com/d2o8zu> (weekly)
- International News Roundup : <http://tinyurl.com/cswpka> (monthly)
- Values Education : <http://tinyurl.com/dls7rv> (monthly)
- Languages Education : <http://tinyurl.com/c59eda> (monthly)
- Ensemble - Music Education : <http://tinyurl.com/dedyz4> (monthly)
- Public Education Voice : <http://tinyurl.com/cy7s78> (quarterly)
- Family School Partners : <http://tinyurl.com/qvleza> (monthly)

Do you know of an event or resource that schools should know about? Email us at [letters@acssso.org.au](mailto:letters@acssso.org.au)

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