

LANGUAGES EDUCATION IN AUSTRALIA

Volume 3 Number 10, 26 November 2009

- [CELEBRATING OUTSTANDING LANGUAGES TEACHERS: AATE winners](#)
- [LANGUAGES TEACHER TRAINING: \(2 items\)](#)
- [INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES: \(5 items\)](#)
- [RESEARCH: \(2 items\)](#)
- [TECHNOLOGY: How a new online approach aims to revolutionise language learning](#)
- [OPINION: Bilingual schooling: Why I wish I was in kindy again, Bill Birtles](#)
- [ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING: It's offishal - English iz darned hard to lurn](#)
- [ENDANGERED LANGUAGES: World's Top Endangered Language Experts Gather](#)
- [RESOURCES: Talk To Your Baby: Bilingualism FAQ](#)
- [NEWS FROM HERE & THERE: \(9 items\)](#)
- [LOCAL EVENTS: \(3 items\)](#)
- [CONFERENCES: \(3 items\)](#)
- [ACSSO EMAIL NEWSLETTERS](#)

CELEBRATING OUTSTANDING LANGUAGES TEACHERS

Macarthur Anglican School teacher Melissa Gould-Drakeley wins national award

Vera Bertola, Macarthur Chronicle (NSW), 11 Nov 09

MACARTHUR Anglican School language teacher Melissa Gould-Drakeley goes well above and beyond the call of duty to give her generation Y students an "authentic" learning experience.

She and a colleague didn't think twice about shipping to the school a real Balinese hut to set up in the school grounds, create a garden around it, decorate it with Indonesian artifacts and invite students to soak up the Indonesian culture.

Ms Gould-Drakeley's (pictured) passion for teaching Indonesian at the Cobbitty School and in the broader community, and her creativity in promoting it, has earned her an Australian Awards for Teaching Excellence Best National Achievement - Excellence in Teacher Leadership.

"I'm overwhelmed to be even nominated. I feel really valued by my college. It's lovely that they value what I am doing," she said.

Read more at <http://macarthur-chronicle-camden.whereilive.com.au/news/story/teacher-melisaa-gould-drakeley-wins-national-award/>

Read the formal Award Citation at:

http://www.teachingaustralia.edu.au/ta/webdav/site/tasite/shared/Awards/Awards%2009/Melissa%20Gould-Drakeley_BestNational.pdf

[< top >](#)

Christiane Conesa-Bostock:

Highly commended for distinguished leadership in French language & culture

Read the Award Citation at:

http://www.teachingaustralia.edu.au/ta/webdav/site/tasite/shared/Awards/Awards%2009/ChristianeConesaBostock%200_HighlyCommended.pdf

[< top >](#)

LANGUAGES TEACHER TRAINING

Successful 2010 Endeavour Language Teacher Fellowships Applicants Announced

The Endeavour Language Teacher Fellowships (ELTF), a part of the Australian Government's broader Endeavour Awards, provide opportunities for:

- practising languages teachers in Australian schools
- trainee (pre-service) languages teachers in Australian universities

to improve their language and cultural skills through intensive short-term study programs. The study programs take place over a three-week period in January each year.

Congratulations to each of the successful applicants. You will be one of 200 Awardees participating in the 2010 ELTF program with a focus on strengthening your language skills, updating and expanding your intercultural understanding, as well as building networks with like-minded professionals.

By taking part in the 2010 ELTF program, practising and trainee languages teachers will be joining other highly motivated educators from all over Australia who have a commitment to language teaching in Australia.

Read the list of successful applicants at

http://www.endeavour.deewr.gov.au/language_teachers_fellowships/2010_ELTF_Recipients.htm

Read more about ELTF at http://www.endeavour.deewr.gov.au/language_teachers_fellowships/

[< top >](#)

Centre aspires to excellence in Asian language education

Deakin University has received Australian Government funding for a project which will establish the Centre for Teaching Asian Languages and Cultures to recruit and train additional teachers of Asian languages and retain and support existing teachers in this field.

Deakin's Building effective partnerships to increase teacher supply and enhance the quality of Asian languages education project was recently selected as one of seven projects to receive funding under round one of the Government's Strategic Collaboration and Partnership Fund, a key element of their National Asian Languages and Studies in Schools Program (NALSSP).

Deputy Dean of Deakin's Faculty of Arts and Education Professor Gary Smith welcomed the announcement of the \$499,100 in funding.

"This is a great success for Deakin and recognises our strengths both in languages and teacher education as well as our capacity to build external partnerships. It is an opportunity for Deakin to make a significant contribution to national priorities in a leadership role," he stated.

In describing the Centre, project manager and founding director Associate Professor Alex Kostogriz from Deakin's School of Education put an emphasis on partnerships and excellence.

Read more at <http://www.deakin.edu.au/news/2009/280809asianlanguages.php>

[< top >](#)

INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES

More teachers available to teach Aboriginal languages

WA Education Minister Liz Constable, 8 October 2009

Aboriginal languages have an increased chance of being preserved with an additional nine Aboriginal educators trained to teach six different languages in public schools.

Education Minister Liz Constable today met with a group of the educators in Broome to congratulate them on their achievement.

Dr Constable said she was pleased almost 6,000 students from kindergarten to Year 11 were learning an Aboriginal language.

These nine teachers join 97 others who have completed the two-year Aboriginal languages teacher training course since its inception, enabling 25 Aboriginal languages to be taught in 79 schools across Western Australia.

Read more at <http://www.mediastatements.wa.gov.au/Lists/Statements/DispForm.aspx?ID=132592>

[< top >](#)

New agreement to boost Indigenous studies in northern NSW

ABC News, Oct 22, 2009

The 14 local Aboriginal Land Councils of the New South Wales northern region, and the University of New England, will today sign a memorandum of understanding to improve teaching and research in Aboriginal affairs.

In a joint announcement, the vice-chancellor, Professor Alan Pettigrew, and the chairman of the Northern Regional Forum, councillor Tom Briggs, have described the announcement as a significant breakthrough.

The initiative will seek to deliver a new range of higher educational opportunities to the region's Indigenous people.

Professor Pettigrew says it has been a long time coming but will make a valuable difference.

Source: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2009/10/22/2721466.htm>

[< top >](#)

NT Bilingual education changes 'defy commonsense'

Anna Henderson, ABC News, 29 October 2009

A group of educators and academics say they have started lobbying the Commonwealth over a Northern Territory Government policy to limit bilingual education.

The Australian Society for Indigenous Languages says the policy forces all remote Aboriginal schools to teach classes in English for the first four hours of the school day.

The Territory Government says Indigenous languages can still be spoken during all classes and learning English is vital for future employment, education and training.

But one of the academics opposing the move, Professor Charles Grimes, says the Australian Society for Indigenous Languages is now appealing directly to federal ministers because the policy defies research and national and international trends in education.

"It actually defies commonsense," he said. "The very basic principle of education is you work from what's known to what is unknown - that's commonsense.

"Another bit of commonsense is children learn best in the language that they know."

Source: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2009/10/29/2727377.htm>

[< top >](#)

Aboriginal content will keep kids at school

Sean Gorman, *The Age*, November 2, 2009

If you go into any country town or remote area you will find Aboriginal people. On pension day you don't need to look too hard to find some of them playing cards under a tree, or in a town's pub playing darts.

Some people believe the dual influences of idleness and passive welfare mean that many indigenous lives are not being fully realised. But if you look closer at both these activities, they involve social maintenance (i.e. maintaining relationships) and complex mathematical problems.

I have often stood in awe of the calculator-like sharpness of indigenous people when playing darts and chalking their score on the board. To do this requires an education.

Indigenous leader Noel Pearson said on ABC's *The 730 Report* a few weeks ago that there were only isolated examples of truly bi-cultural Aboriginal people who succeed in both worlds. His key message, as I understood it, was the need for an education that would enable indigenous Australians to participate in mainstream Australia while keeping their culture, heritage and traditional languages.

Pearson wants to make "bi-cultural" people (those who can move between worlds, institutions and groups confidently) the norm - and I, for one, applaud him. But perhaps a more nuanced approach to education needs to be taken.

Read entire article: <http://www.theage.com.au/opinion/politics/aboriginal-content-will-keep-kids-at-school-20091102-hrto.html>

Dr Sean Gorman is a research fellow at the Centre for Aboriginal Studies at Curtin University in Western Australia.

[< top >](#)

Language is power; let us have ours

Aden Ridgeway, *The Age*, November 25, 2009

Once, while travelling through many remote communities on the Tanami Track, an old man said to me, "Come speak my language and I'll speak yours".

It was only then that I completely understood what my own grandmother, who spoke the Gumbaynggirr language of the NSW north coast, had taught me about the importance of language in our lives - it goes to the heart and soul of one's identity and gives connection to family, country and community. It instils a sense of enormous pride and provides the strength from which to see the world beyond the fences of your own community - then everything seems possible.

I look forward to the day when Canberra makes a decision that one verse of our national anthem should be sung in an Aboriginal language.

The way we deal with indigenous language goes to the heart of how we see Aboriginal communities, how we see ourselves and how we deal with the range of problems that exist in these communities as being "in" or "outside" of the national story and, therefore, deserving of proper treatment.

Yet the Northern Territory and Federal governments have mandated a requirement that all Aboriginal children in all Territory schools must learn in English for the first four hours of learning from next year, sidelining education in indigenous languages.

This decision is especially short-sighted, demonstrating a mindset plaguing Aboriginal affairs that devalues and demonises the strength and value of culture and identity within our indigenous communities.

In the ongoing debate about bilingual education, addressing "disadvantage" is used as the mask to hide opposition to our claims for language and identity. Our treatment at the hands of the broader society is presented as lying outside the national story - a story told, for the most part, in English.

If we are ever to hope that things will get better in many of these communities, then change must start with each Australian appreciating the cries for recognising indigenous identity.

Read entire article, plus Gumbaynggirr translation, at: <http://www.theage.com.au/opinion/language-is-power-let-us-have-ours-20091125-jrsb.html>

Aden Ridgeway was the second Aboriginal member of an Australian parliament,

[< top >](#)

RESEARCH

Students learning bilingually: investigating learning experiences and personal outcomes

Janet Beck, Assistant Principal, Richmond West Primary School, Curriculum Leadership, 18 September 2009

Richmond West Primary School in Melbourne operates bilingual programs in English/Mandarin Chinese and English/Vietnamese.

The programs support and encourage children in the development of Chinese or Vietnamese as a first language, as well as English as a second language, while also offering a strong start to second language learning for students from English-speaking backgrounds.

The programs have been the subject of two articles in The Age newspaper, and bilingual classes have been observed by overseas delegations organised by Victoria's Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD).

Earlier this year Richmond West initiated an evaluation of bilingual education at the school, with support from DEECD's Research Grants to Schools program.

The evaluation sought to identify the educational and personal outcomes for students participating in the programs, and give staff a richer picture of their impact. The evaluation explored students' use of language, their self-perceived levels of proficiency in each of the languages of instruction, and students' beliefs about the benefits and challenges of learning bilingually. Students' levels of academic achievement, across all languages of instruction, were analysed alongside this evidence.

Read more at <http://cmslive.curriculum.edu.au/leader/default.asp?id=28811&issueID=11921>

[< top >](#)

Brains Benefit From Multilingualism

Science Daily, Oct. 19, 2009

For a considerable time already there has been discussion within scientific circles about whether knowing and using multiple languages could possibly have positive effects on the human brain and thinking. There have been a number of international studies on the subject, which indicate that the ability to use more than one language brings an individual a considerable advantage.

The report of the research team appointed by the European Commission, "The Contribution of Multilingualism to Creativity," presents the first known macro analysis based on the available evidence, which has been conducted by searching through several studies and giving particular attention on recent research on the brain.

David Marsh, specialized planner at the Continuing Professional Development Centre of Jyväskylä University, who coordinated the international research team behind the study, says that especially the research conducted within neurosciences offers an increasing amount of strong evidence of versatile knowledge of languages being beneficial for the usage of an individual's brain.

"The research report brings forth six main areas where multilingualism and hence the mastery of complex processes of thought seem to put people in advantage. These include learning in general, complex thinking and creativity, mental flexibility, interpersonal and communication skills, and even a possible delay in the onset of age-related mental diminishment later in life," Marsh relates.

Read more at <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2009/10/091029151807.htm>

Read the report at

http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/lp/studies/study_on_the_contribution_of_multilingualism_to_creativity_en.php

[< top >](#)

TECHNOLOGY

How a new online approach aims to revolutionise language learning

Virginia Matthews, Independent (UK), 15 October 2009

Five years since secondary school pupils were allowed to drop languages after the age of 14, the number of young people taking a modern foreign language at GCSE has slumped. The Government currently has no plans to make languages a compulsory subject again, preferring instead to make them available to all primary schoolchildren. But there are new initiatives afoot to encourage secondary school pupils to learn foreign languages.

The Open School for Languages (provisionally called MYLO), a £5.4m online learning project, is one of the main initiatives being unveiled next year to support teenagers learning a key language. Aimed at harnessing the best of new technology and the interest that most young people have in online as well as face-to-face learning, the open school is designed to provide 11 to 16-year-olds with a new range of online materials relevant to their world, as well as new resources for teachers.

The scheme will begin with French, German, Spanish and Mandarin, but more languages will be added if initial results are positive. The first modules will focus on the basics and preliminary skills for Key Stage 3, while the later modules will be for GCSE students.

Read entire article: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/education/schools/different-class-how-a-new-online-approach-aims-to-revolutionise-language-learning-1802620.html>

[< top >](#)

OPINION

Bilingual schooling: Why I wish I was in kindy again

Bill Birtles, ABC News, 5 November 2009

When I was in primary school, we learnt French. It was not by choice, it just happened to be what was taught at my school.

A few years later in high school, with no great passion for the language of love, I dropped out of the classes, cast it aside and resigned myself to the great Australian tradition of monolingualism.

Years later, with school a distant memory, I took a chance on a language described as one of the hardest in the world - Mandarin. It has been a fruitful pursuit ever since, and as my curiosity about all things Chinese increase, I cannot help feel it would have been nice to have known about this language and culture a lot earlier in life.

Fortunately, for a small group of New South Wales kindergarten students, they will be in a position to tackle this challenging but useful language a lot earlier than I could. That is because the State Government has announced that four schools will next year begin an ambitious new bilingual program to teach students from their first year onwards the four key languages of our region.

Sharon Tribolet from the P&C for the school starting the Mandarin classes - Rouse Hill Public - says most parents will take up the opportunity. Ms. Tribolet has dismissed concerns that bilingual schooling could disadvantage non-Asian students who cannot practice the language at home, pointing out that many students who top HSC language courses each year do not have any family members with whom they can speak the language they studied.

Read entire article: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2009/11/05/2733960.htm>

[< top >](#)

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING

It's offishal - English iz darned hard to lurn

Bridie Smith, the Age, November 17, 2009

RESEARCH has confirmed that English is "the worst" language to learn to read - of those that use the Roman alphabet. School students take at least two years to grasp reading it, as opposed to three or four months for a "transparent" language such as Italian.

"The spelling is impossible," renowned French brain expert Stanislas Dehaene said yesterday. "If you learn Italian, you learn the sounds for each of the letters and then you can read Italian. The letter-to-sound correspondence is transparent."

But that is not the case for English - or for Professor Dehaene's native tongue, French, which he admits is the "second-worst" language to learn to read.

Professor Dehaene, author of more than 150 scientific papers, is considered a world leader in the science behind reading. He is in Melbourne as a guest of the Mental Health Research Institute and University of Melbourne, his visit coinciding with the Australian release of his latest book *Reading in the Brain*.

His latest research has shown that the complexity and irregular spelling of English resulted in significant delays in learning to read. "Comparisons in European countries have shown that this has a huge impact of several years of delay in reading for children learning English," he said.

Read entire article: <http://www.theage.com.au/national/education/its-offishal--english-iz-darned-hard-to-lurn-20091116-ii9z.html>

[< top >](#)

ENDANGERED LANGUAGES

Losing Your Tongue: World's Top Endangered Language Experts Gather

Science Daily, Nov. 3, 2009

Elder Tommy George has not spoken his aboriginal language of Kuku Thaypan for three years, since his brother died. "It might die in the throat, but it stays alive in the heart," he said to the Queensland Courier-Mail in June, 2009.

What happens when you no longer have anyone to talk to in your own language?

"A language is not just words and grammar; it is a web of history that binds all the people who once spoke the language, all the things they did together, all the knowledge they imparted to their descendants," says Anthony Aristar, professor of linguistics at Eastern Michigan University. "When a language dies, it's just the same as when a species dies. You lose a part of the network of life, and you lose everything it could impart."

Aristar is one of fifty international experts in endangered languages who will convene at the University of Utah November 12 to 14 to take the first step in a massive undertaking to catalogue endangered and dying languages and to make the information accessible through a comprehensive online database.

Read entire article: <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2009/11/091102085834.htm>

[< top >](#)

RESOURCES

Talk To Your Baby: Bilingualism FAQ

UK National Literacy Trust, November 2009

Talk To Your Baby is a campaign run by the National Literacy Trust to encourage parents and carers to talk more to children from birth to three. Talking to young children helps them become good communicators, which is essential if they are to do well at school and lead happy, fulfilled and successful lives.

Is it an advantage to speak more than one language?

Yes. Bilingualism helps children's learning because they can think about their ideas in both languages. They can communicate with more people in their community and internationally and understand different cultures. They stay connected to their family, so they feel secure in their identity and have more self-confidence. This helps them do well at school. They can learn other languages more easily and have more job opportunities in the future.

Is it true that all bilingual children start to speak later than monolingual children?

There is no evidence that bilingual children learn to speak later. Some children, whether bilingual or monolingual, learn to speak later than others.

Should parents speak their mother tongue at home?

Yes. If children know their first language well, it will help them learn English. When they understand an idea in their first language (such as numbers or colours), they easily pick up the English word that means the same thing. They also know how to use grammar and vocabulary in their first language, so they can quickly work out what is similar or different about the English language.

Download entire FAQ at <http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/talktoyourbaby/FAQsonbilingualism.pdf>

See also the UK-based Our Languages website at: <http://www.ourlanguages.org.uk/>

[< top >](#)

NEWS FROM HERE & THERE

Rudd's legacy on language studies

Bruce McDougall, Daily Telegraph, October 09, 2009

MANDARIN is becoming a centrepiece of foreign language teaching in NSW public schools, with Chinese language teachers being brought to Australia and at least one Australian teacher setting up in China.

It is part of a Department of Education and Training push to put Mandarin at the forefront of language teaching in NSW public schools.

So far 25 primary and secondary schools have linked with schools in the Yangzhou province and in Shanghai's Pudong District.

Mandarin is a language used by the Prime Minister Kevin Rudd.

Almost 30 students and teachers from Georges River College campuses in Sydney's south left for China this week to visit a sister school and study with Chinese pupils. Another 36 students and teachers from Sydney's west will travel to China tomorrow.

Mandarin teachers are working in NSW state schools while teachers in China give visiting Sydney pupils language lessons as well as training local teachers and students in English.

Read more at <http://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/news/rudds-legacy-on-language-studies/story-e6freuy9-1225784483819>

[< top >](#)

Graduates without a second language are disadvantaged when looking for jobs

Kathryn Board, Independent (UK), 15 October 2009

Michael Palin said in a recent newspaper interview that what he regretted most was not being able to speak another language properly.

This sentiment is echoed widely in the adult population, according to a YouGov poll that showed most Britons' biggest regret from their school days was not taking a language to a higher level.

Although this year's figures show a bottoming out of the decline in the numbers of teenagers opting to take a foreign language, only 44 per cent are going on to gain a GCSE qualification. This is unreasonably low for a country that wants to make its voice heard internationally.

One in 20 students takes French as one of their A-level choices, and only 3 per cent of university students take a foreign language as a single or combined degree subject.

Surely, as the global economy emerges from the financial crisis with a much less Anglophone orientation, individuals and business will have a greater need of languages to keep them competitive.

Read entire article: <http://www.independent.co.uk/student/career-planning/getting-job/kathryn-board-graduates-without-a-second-language-are-disadvantaged-when-looking-for-jobs-1802619.html>

[< top >](#)

Asian language funding better spent on literacy: MP

ABC News, Oct 23, 2009

Member for Gilmore in New South Wales Joanna Gash has criticised the Federal Government for spending millions of dollars to teach students Asian languages.

More than \$6 million worth of grants are being allocated to schools to become "Asia Literate" by teaching languages and incorporating studies of Asia into the curriculum.

Albion Park High School is the only school in the Illawarra and Shoalhaven to receive a grant in the first round of the program.

Joanna Gash says the money would be better spent on providing English literacy programs to students with learning difficulties.

Read more at <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2009/10/23/2722191.htm>

[< top >](#)

International Schools need parents to help children become bilingual

Bangkok Post, 27 October 2009

Thai parents who send their children to international schools thinking that that will enable their children to become more proficiently bilingual - in English and Thai - may need to think more deeply.

"When Thai parents enrol their children in an English immersion school, do they want them to speak only English, or do they want them to be able to speak both English and Thai?" asks Virginia Pauline Rojas. This is a big question that Thai parents have to consider when they put their children in an English immersion school, such as an international school.

Thai children whose parents sent them to attend an international school at an early age may be more fluent in English than Thai, especially when it comes to the task of writing. It is important that parents and teachers know how to help students achieve fluency in both English and Thai, not only in specific skills like speaking and listening, but also reading and writing.

Parents who want their children to excel in both languages have to work closely with their offspring, according to Dr Rojas. International schools have the responsibility of teaching the English language to the children, while the parents will have to deal with teaching Thai. The Thai-language programme taught in international schools, by itself, is not enough, she says.

Read entire article: <http://www.bangkokpost.com/life/education/26363/how-to-achieve-bilingualism>

[< top >](#)

Foreign language teaching is in decline

Richard Garner, Independent (UK), Friday, 30 October 2009

A dearth of trainee modern foreign language teachers is hampering a Government drive to ensure all children start learning another language from the age of seven.

New figures disclosed to The Independent show a drop in the number of trainee primary school teachers specialising in languages. The number has fallen from 710 to 560 in two years – despite next year's Government deadline for making the subject compulsory for seven- to 11-year-olds.

In secondary schools the numbers fell by 290 to 1,800 over the same period. A Government inquiry headed by former chief schools inspector Sir Jim Rose called for the subject to be introduced into the timetable in 2011.

"When ministers dropped the compulsory study of language up to age 16 a few years ago, the other half of the deal was improved provision in primary schools," said Michael Gove, the Conservatives' education spokesman.

"But these figures show that the number of trainee primary teachers with a specialisation in languages is actually falling, as is the number of language specialists overall.

"For all the Government's promise of improving modern foreign languages, in reality things are going in the wrong direction."

Read entire article: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/education/education-news/foreign-language-teaching-is-in-decline-1811719.html>

[< top >](#)

California school hopes to start nation's first Arabic immersion program

Sharon Naguchi, Mercury News (USA), 3 November 2009

Even as high school students learn the flourishes of Arabic script and unaccustomed sounds of the spoken language, they face the sobering prospect that after this year, they've still got about 2,100 hours of class left to master what the U.S. State Department considers an "exceptionally difficult" language for native English speakers. Its written language is a challenge even for native Arabic speakers.

How much better to immerse students in the language from a young age — which is exactly what FAME School hopes to do starting next year. The 4-year-old school that focuses on serving immigrants from the Middle East and South Asia has outlined a plan to start the first K-12 dual-immersion Arabic program in the nation.

If approved by the Alameda County Board of Education, FAME would begin with one class of kindergartners and add a grade each year; immersion programs typically mix children who speak one language with children who speak another, so classmates supplement the dual-language instruction. The school would continue to educate other children in English.

In a post-9/11 world, there's a strong demand for Arabic speakers, the school's founder Maram Alaiwat said. "People are coming to this school saying 'we want our kids to be global citizens,' and they love the exposure to foreign language in kindergarten," she said.

Read entire article: http://www.mercurynews.com/valley/ci_13697742?nclick_check=1

[< top >](#)

Primary students get bilingual education

Brisbane Times, November 4, 2009 (AAP)

The money the NSW government will spend on a new bilingual program in primary schools would be better spent on special education, the NSW Teachers Federation says.

Four schools will trial a state-funded bilingual program next year to boost the study of Asian languages.

Students will be taught in a foreign language - Mandarin, Japanese, Korean and Indonesian - for 90 minutes a day.

In 2010, participating schools will include four government primary schools - Rouse Hill Public and Murray Farm in Sydney's northwest, Scotts Head Public on the North Coast, and Campsie Public in Sydney's inner-west.

Kindergarten and Year 1 students will initially be given bilingual instruction, with plans for all grades to eventually be included, Education Minister Verity Firth told The Daily Telegraph.

Read more at <http://news.brisbanetimes.com.au/breaking-news-national/primary-students-get-bilingual-education-20091104-hvkh.html>

[< top >](#)

Latin is leaping ahead in state primary schools as part of languages push

Richard Garner & Lewis Smith, Independent (UK), 9 November 2009

More than 60 state primaries will teach the classical language as part of a project aimed at making languages compulsory for all children from the age of seven. Those behind it say it is the best way of introducing children to language learning, particularly because it is the root of the five Romance languages (French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese and Romanian).

Peter Downes, a former president of the Association of School and College Leaders, said Latin was "an excellent vehicle for teaching about language structure as well as having obvious cross-curricular links to history and civilisation".

He heads a project set up by the head teachers' union and the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation which is trying to persuade ministers to introduce children to a broader range of languages in primary schools and help them decide which ones they want to pursue in secondary schools.

It began by piloting its plans in a handful of schools in Cambridgeshire and has just expanded this to about 60. There is a campaign to make languages compulsory for seven to 11-year-olds in 2011, and Mr. Downes has written to Sir Jim Rose, who led a government inquiry into the primary-school curriculum, arguing against his recommendation that schools should concentrate on just one or two languages.

Under this project's proposals, children learn a range of languages – French, German, Spanish, Japanese, Punjabi and Latin.

Read entire article: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/education/education-news/haud-mea-culpa-domina-as-they-say-in-primary-school-1817251.html>

[< top >](#)

Budget woes frustrate foreign language goals

Michael Alison Chandler, Washington Post (USA), November 17, 2009

The Fairfax County School Board took a sharp detour from America's aversion to learning foreign languages when it adopted an ambitious goal in 2006 that language instruction should start early and graduates should be able to speak two languages.

In an increasingly interconnected world, school leaders reasoned, English is insufficient to succeed at international business or diplomacy. Fairfax County, a cosmopolitan suburb near a seat of world power, where 40 percent of students hear or speak another language at home, seemed a natural place to make foreign language instruction a top priority.

Lean budget years have tested that resolve. In tough times, parents and board members are debating whether foreign language instruction, particularly in early years, is fundamental or a frill.

"It's a lovely thing to have. I would support it greatly if we had the money," said Fairfax parent Emily Slough, referring to an elementary language program that could be cut next year. "But we are down to bare bones."

Some parents support the school system's language goals but criticize the elementary programs. Others are skeptical of the foreign language emphasis, noting that English is spoken worldwide.

Read entire article: http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/11/16/AR2009111603611_pf.html

[< top >](#)

LOCAL EVENTS

Raising Children In More Than One Language

Sunday November 29, University of Melbourne, VIC

Raising children bilingually is a very important process. There are many positive strategies that can be employed.

The sessions in this seminar discuss issues in raising children bilingually, show you how to recognise your child's needs in the language and provide you with important tools to foster your child's language learning and maximise the advantages available to you.

Speakers include Prof. Michael Clyne, Dr. Susanne Döpke, Prof. John Hajek.

Seminar topics include:

- Issues in raising children bilingually
- Recognising the child's own needs in the language
- Practical suggestions for helping your child learn your language
- Maximising the advantages from school programs, grandparents, overseas visits and the Community
- Using the internet and digital media in working with children

Read more at <http://www.rumaccc.unimelb.edu.au/events/index.html>

[< top >](#)

Annual Multilingual Picnic run by ACT Bilingual Education Alliance

Sunday 6 December, 11.00 am to 14.00 pm

Black Mountain Peninsula (off Lady Denman Drive)

Come along and celebrate our multilingual community at our annual free event. Meet other families raising their children to speak more than one language. Find out more about raising children from the earliest years in a languages-rich environment.

Bring friends, family, a picnic, and something to sit on. Relax and have a good time!!

Contact: Marina Houston – Marina.Houston@canberra.edu.au or mobile 0414 269 335

Find out more about the ACT Bilingual Education Alliance:

http://www.communitiesonline.org.au/calendar/view_group.php?id=11513

[< top >](#)

Melbourne Language Picnic

Sunday 21 March 2010 [Harmony Day]

Collingwood Children's Farm, Melbourne, Victoria

Come join the Melbourne Language Picnic team; you won't be disappointed! Get to know a great bunch of people and promote languages education in Australia.

March 21st (Harmony Day) is the date for next year's Language Picnic in Melbourne. At the moment Angela, Brigitte and Elizabeth are working on the project arranging funding, the venue (Collingwood Children's Farm) and community involvement. However we require more volunteers to help make it a fantastic day and promote languages education at the same time.

After funding, probably the most important ingredient is community involvement. We need volunteers who would like to help with setting up games, story readings and representing the different language communities that exist across Australia.

Please feel free to join in and register your desire to help – visit us at <http://melbournelanguagespicnic.ning.com/>

Read about local events around Australia and network with like-minded people at the Languages Action Alliance website: <http://www.lingo.org.au>

[< top >](#)

CONFERENCES

International Conference on Language, Society & Culture in Asian Contexts

6-7 January 2010, Mahasarakham University, Thailand

The conference aims to raise awareness of the essence and significance of Asian languages, societies, and cultures, especially those which have been overlooked or marginalized as inferior to those in the Western world.

Since foreign language teaching plays an important role as a medium in launching Asian languages, societies, and cultures into the world stage where those languages operate, foreign languages taught and studied in Asia are also the main focus of this conference.

For details see: <http://www.lscac.msu.ac.th/>

[< top >](#)

9th International Conference on South Asian Languages

7-9 January 2010, Patiala, Punjab, India

Check the event website for latest details: <http://icosal.ning.com/notes/ICOSAL-9>

[< top >](#)

Global language Convention

8-11 April 2010, Wesley College, Melbourne, Victoria

The 2010 Global Language Convention 'Many Cultures, One Community: Language, Knowing and Power' brings together language experts, educators, practitioners and policy makers from around the world in dialogue and critical engagement with the ever growing body of knowledge in the area of language and learning.

Topics include:

- From text to message - literature, media & communication cultures for C21 learning; Language loss and reclamation;
- Taking responsibility for the 2nd language learner in the mainstream language environment;
- The brain, learning and language;
- Multilingual matters - beyond making the case for learning more than one language;
- Defining, developing, refining, maintaining the mother tongue;
- 'Every teacher is a language teacher' - critical issues in managing language and learning in schools.

Full details and registration: <http://www.wesleycollege.net/convention.cfm>

[< top >](#)

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)
- Family School Partners : <http://www.familyschool.org.au/news/> (monthly)
- Public Education Voice : <http://www.acsso.org.au/pev.htm> (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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