

# LANGUAGES EDUCATION IN AUSTRALIA

Volume 4 Number 1, 11 February 2010

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## KERFUFFLE IN QUEENSLAND

### Languages other than English suffer in Queensland

*Editorial comment, Courier Mail, January 16, 2010*

LEARNING a language other than English was an important part of the skills set Queensland students needed when then top bureaucrat Kevin Rudd pushed for a comprehensive curriculum restructure in the early 1990s.

The report Mr. Rudd commissioned, produced by Griffith University's Nancy Viviani, was groundbreaking and formed the basis for a national Asian language and studies strategy.

At the time the Goss government said learning a foreign language was the pathway to "intellectual, cultural and economic benefits". Given the closer economic and cultural ties with Asia that have developed in the past 20 years, this kind of thinking should be even more important today. Apparently, it is not.

Without any public acknowledgment, the Bligh Government has dumbed down education for young Queenslanders by allowing schools to opt out of teaching a language other than English as a compulsory subject for Years 6, 7 and 8.

And while the Education Department cannot say yet how many schools have given up providing this education to students, the suggestion is that about one in four state schools have taken the easy option of not even trying in this useful and rewarding endeavour.

Claims that this new approach will redirect funds to schools where students are keen to study LOTE (Languages Other Than English) ignore the benefits of some language learning across the board. Education and teaching specialists agree that studying a second language not only provides an additional – often invaluable – skill but also sharpens learning capabilities and improves overall brain function.

Read more at <http://www.news.com.au/couriermail/story/0,,26592905-13360,00.html>

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## Queensland Government back-flips on foreign language studies

*Tanya Chilcott, Courier Mail, January 16, 2010 (2.25 pm)*

THE State Government has back-flipped on its controversial decision to drop the mandatory status on the teaching of foreign languages in all state schools following The Courier-Mail report this morning.

Acting Education Minister Stephen Robertson moved to separate the Bligh Government from the Education Department changes, stating the "optional" approach to foreign languages in Years 6, 7 and 8 was not Bligh Government policy and was not endorsed by cabinet.

"It is not in accordance with our commitment to providing all students with a world-class education - of which LOTE (Languages Other Than English) is a very important part - and this optional approach will not continue," Mr. Robertson said.

Read more at <http://www.news.com.au/couriermail/story/0,23739,26593467-3102,00.html>

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## Language subjects back-flip in Queensland schools

*Tanya Chilcott, Courier Mail, January 17, 2010 (11:00pm)*

FOREIGN languages will be reinstated as a mandatory subject in state schools following a stunning weekend back-flip by the State Government.

Education officials have been ordered to "begin work immediately" on reinstating language subjects, after The Courier-Mail revealed the department had quietly allowed principals to opt out of teaching LOTE (Languages Other Than English) in Years 6, 7 and 8 – the years it used to be compulsory.

Education assistant-director general Yvana Jones last week said the changes – implemented statewide in 2009 – were made because a one-size-fits-all approach didn't work in state schools, with research showing children were disengaging from LOTE and resources could be better targeted.

But experts slammed the move as short-sighted, damaging and out-of-step.

Within hours of the story appearing on Saturday, Acting Education Minister Stephen Robertson moved to separate the Bligh Government from the Department's changes.

"It is not in accordance with our commitment to providing all students with a world-class education – of which LOTE is a very important part – and this optional approach will not continue.

"The delivery of LOTE across all Queensland government schools will be urgently reviewed," Mr Robertson said.

Read entire article: <http://www.news.com.au/couriermail/story/0,,26600608-3102,00.html>

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## Now we're speaking the same language

*Editorial comment, Courier Mail, January 19, 2010*

THE Bligh Government was quick to see sense and reinstate the teaching of languages other than English as a fixed part of the curriculum for Years 6, 7 and 8 after The Courier-Mail reported that bureaucrats had quietly shelved the policy, allowing schools to opt out.

This is the kind of listening and responding the public likes to see and welcomes but it still begs the question of how this important aspect of education in Queensland could have been dumped without Minister Geoff Wilson even knowing it had happened.

Let's hope this inspires ministers to find out what's going on in their departments – something we shouldn't have to remind them to do.

Source: <http://www.news.com.au/couriermail/story/0,,26604354-13360,00.html>

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## INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES & CULTURE

### The race to save Indigenous languages

*Louisa Rebgetz, ABC News, 8 February 2010*

Experts are working hard to record several Top End Aboriginal languages that are down to their very last speakers. In the remote Northern Territory community of Wadeye linguists say four languages will be gone in the next decade.

Patrick Palibu Nudjulu is a Magati Ke elder, custodian of the Rak Naniny clan and is one of two remaining speakers of the Magati Ke language. His sick and elderly sister can speak Magati Ke, but not to the point where she can help in the documentation of the language.

Maree Klesch works closely with Mr Nudjulu through her job at the Endangered Languages Centre at Batchelor Institute for Indigenous tertiary education. Ms Klesch said languages are dying in the community at the hands of the dominant Murrinhpatha language, which is used at the local school.

"Within 10 years certainly four of the languages we are currently working on with Wadeye probably won't be there and there are several reasons for that," she said. "Languages may not be spoken in the home as much because of the lingua franca of the community."

Read entire article: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2010/02/08/2812936.htm>

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### "Dying Words"

*Lingua Franca, ABC Radio National, 16 January 2010*

Maria Zijlstra: Maria Zijlstra here with Lingua Franca to talk about a terrifically exciting new book, one I absolutely loved for the knowledge as well as the enjoyment that it afforded me.

Its author Nick Evans, head of the department of linguistics in the Research School of Pacific Studies at the Australian National University, is a treasure-house of first-hand knowledge and collected information about language—Australian Indigenous languages in particular—having learned and researched a number of them.

And the book, *Dying Words: Endangered Languages and What They Have to Tell Us*, is so packed that I'm sorry to say we can only discuss just a bit of it.

So let's just start where you do, Nick, in retelling the traditional Warramurrungunji story from north-western Arnhem Land because it demonstrates very neatly something I'm very grateful to you for making so clear, which is that in the history of the logosphere, which is all the world's words and languages that have ever existed, the vast majority of them have only ever been spoken by quite small speech communities, x-hundreds or thousands, rather than hundreds of thousands or millions, and that this is a product of what we've been, we humans, for most of our time here on earth, members of hunter-gatherer communities, deeply embedded in particular environments and ecosystems.

Nicholas Evans: Yeah. So I start the book with that story because I think it's an interesting counterpoint to the Babel myth that we all grow up with in Judeo-Christian tradition, which is that multilingualism is a punishment to humans for their presumption—it's a way of making sure we stay a bit behind technologically.

Listen to the program online, download and/or read the transcript at:  
<http://www.abc.net.au/rn/linguafranca/stories/2010/2793412.htm>

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## RESEARCH

**2009 Languages Trends Survey shows pressures on schools and pupils limit prospects of recovery for languages**

The results of the latest Language Trends survey show that the number of students choosing to take a language at 14 is still in decline.

The findings, based on a survey sent to 2000 schools in England, revealed that the proportion of schools where more than 50 per cent of pupils study a language in year 10 has dropped from 45% in 2008-9 to 40% in the current school year.

Interestingly, the survey shows that it is not due to disaffection from students but from the structure of post-14 education and its link to performance tables.

Schools are taking part in a wide range of new initiatives to improve take up, and they are already starting to show an impact on pupils' attitudes. However, their effectiveness in increasing numbers is limited by

- the wide choice of subjects available;
- pressure on schools and pupils to achieve higher grades and
- narrowly-focused advice from parents, tutors and others.

Read more at [http://www.cilt.org.uk/home/research\\_and\\_statistics/language\\_trends\\_surveys/secondary/2009.aspx](http://www.cilt.org.uk/home/research_and_statistics/language_trends_surveys/secondary/2009.aspx)

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## **Language learning must focus on personal not economic benefits**

*ACER, 30 September 2009*

The case for increased second language learning in Australia is better grounded in the personal benefits to individual learners than in arguments about economic and social benefits according to a new review of research released today by the Australian Council for Educational Research.

ACER Chief Executive Professor Geoff Masters said that even limited contact with a second language can have a positive effect by supporting and illuminating students' knowledge of their first language.

The new review, *Second Languages and Australian Schooling* traces the history of language learning in Australia, outlines the findings of research from Australia and overseas and proposes a new rationale for language learning policy.

The central argument in the review is for a major improvement in the quality of language teaching across the nation. Professor Lo Bianco argues that while the single most important variable in second language education is the quality of language teachers, at times the quality of language teaching in Australia has been too low.

"It is an unfortunate aspect of past policy that utilitarian rationales, and the often crisis-driven pressure to establish programs quickly, have resulted in a proliferation of rather superficial second language teaching endeavours."

Download the report at: [http://www.acer.edu.au/documents/AER\\_54-SecondLanguagesAndAustralianSchooling.pdf](http://www.acer.edu.au/documents/AER_54-SecondLanguagesAndAustralianSchooling.pdf)

Read entire release: [http://www.acer.edu.au/documents/MR\\_AER-54--300909.pdf](http://www.acer.edu.au/documents/MR_AER-54--300909.pdf)

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## **OPINION**

### **Culturally adrift without classical moorings**

*Dan Ryan, the Australian, 11 January 2010*

A return to Latin and ancient Greek would make for a real education revolution...

MY grandfather, who spent most of his life on a sheep station in western Queensland, could quote tracts of Virgil and Homer from memory.

My mother topped Latin in year 10 in her school in Brisbane in the 1960s, but things were on the slide; her prize was a copy of the Iliad not in Greek but in English, and in an abridged form, with all the poetry stripped away.

By the time I went to school there was apparently no need to teach the classics any more. They were dead languages and, besides, there was not enough time in the school day to fit them in between classes in home economics, woodwork, typing and the like. How sure are we that the effective elimination of the classics from our education system has been without consequence?

Educators once believed in the classical education very strongly. Little more than a generation ago you could not get into Oxford or Cambridge without demonstrating competency in Latin, and practically every Western historical figure and writer until the 1950s was taught the classics from an early age.

The line of thinking that we don't need to learn Latin and Greek because they are too hard, irrelevant, not useful or not the languages of the future would have been regarded as the argument of philistines.

The rationale was not always stated explicitly; it was simply understood. A classical education was needed first of all to impart content -- to maintain basic Western cultural literacy.

Read entire article: <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/opinion/culturally-adrift-without-classical-moorings/story-e6frg6zo-1225817861036>

Dan Ryan is a general counsel to a leading information technology company. He has worked in Hong Kong and China for 10 years.

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## **Languages need to be a priority for the pupils' and the nation's sake**

*Teresa Tinsley, UK Centre for Information on Language Teaching, 20 January 2010*

The employment outlook for young people is looking grim as this country struggles to create jobs and opportunities in the aftermath of the recession.

Employers want people who are internationally aware and confident about working across different cultures. Increasingly too, they want people with language skills and they are finding them not amongst our own home grown talent but in young people from other parts of Europe and beyond.

If we want to give our young people the best possible chance to succeed, we need to make sure that they have had a strong grounding in foreign languages at school.

That's why we were delighted when the Government announced last year that languages are to become a statutory part of the primary curriculum from 2011.

But if you are 14 or 15 you are more likely than not to have given up on languages. Most schools now have fewer than half their pupils studying a language after 14.

Of course, we've known for some time that there has been a huge drop out from languages since they were made optional post 14. This was put down to pupils' disaffection with the subject.

Teenagers were supposedly turned off languages by uninspiring course content and teaching.. Now teachers are saying that it is not pupil attitudes that are the problem but the system of ever-widening option choices, a scramble for good grades and performance table pressures on schools which prevent higher take up.

Read more at <http://www.independent.co.uk/opinion/commentators/comment-languages-need-to-be-a-priority-for-the-pupils-and-the-nations-sake-1873850.html>

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## **Other languages help us understand our own**

*Christopher Bantick, January 20, 2010*

IT is difficult to see why there is any doubt over the place of foreign languages in Queensland classrooms.

When The Courier-Mail revealed last week the Education Department had quietly allowed primary school principals to opt out of teaching LOTE (languages other than English) the Acting Education Minister Stephen Robertson was quick to react.

He soon shut down any talk of LOTE not being compulsory in Years 6, 7 and 8 in Queensland schools, saying: "The delivery of LOTE across all Queensland government schools will be urgently reviewed."

According to Queensland Education Department figures, 298 state schools did not teach a LOTE subject in 2009. This is cause for concern. It also does not reflect the current research emphasising the benefits of LOTE being taught.

A study into LOTE teaching by the Australian Council for Educational Research last year stressed that monolingual children in Australian classrooms are missing out. Given that there are 350 languages spoken in Australian homes, the ACER review notes: "Learning and using an additional language at school should provide a rich educational and practical experience."

The Education Department cited research showing children were disengaging from LOTE as part of its reasoning for its original decision to make foreign language teaching optional. However, the reason some children are disengaged is clear: To understand a foreign language, first you need to understand your own.

Read more at <http://www.news.com.au/couriermail/story/0,,26608082-27197,00.html>

Christopher Bantick is a Melbourne writer and education commentator.

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## **CONSTRUCTING LANGUAGE**

### **The creation of extraterrestrial Na'vi**

*Lingua Franca, ABC Radio National, 6 February 2010*

Maria Zijlstra: And now, for something out of this world—hello from me, Maria Zijlstra for Lingua franca here on ABC Radio National—talking this time about the huge blockbuster that's breaking all the records for movie takings and attendances, Avatar; and about the language of the extraterrestrial blue beings who inhabit the distant planet of Pandora—members of the Na'vi tribe, who speak Na'vi, a language invented by Paul Frommer.

Professor Frommer has a doctorate in linguistics but, also, much experience in the real world of business, and teaches in the Centre for Management Communication in the School of Business at the University of Southern California.

As a lover of languages though, he was quick to respond to an email from the director of Avatar, James Cameron, looking for someone to invent a language for the movie. Right, Paul?

Download the audio and listen to entire interview – transcript also provided – at:  
<http://www.abc.net.au/rn/linguafranca/stories/2010/2810226.htm#transcript>

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## **NEWS FROM HERE AND THERE**

### **Plan to resurrect foreign languages in schools.**

*Graeme Paton, Telegraph (UK), 04 Jan 2010*

Ed Balls, the Schools Secretary, said every secondary school pupil should have the opportunity to take the subject to meet the needs of business. He said "up and coming languages" were increasingly in demand and pupils should be suitably equipped for the world of work.

Speaking in central London, Mr Balls also suggested that more children should be able to study Polish, Russian and Arabic up to GCSE level, in addition to mainstream languages such as French, German and Spanish.

The Government admitted Mandarin teachers could not be employed in every school and suggested pupils would be given tuition at specialist language schools nearby.

A similar announcement has already been made in relation to primary schools following a decision to make languages compulsory for all seven- to 11-year-olds from 2011.

Read entire article: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/6931688/Mandarin-for-all-pupils-says-Ed-Balls.html>

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### **Schools Fuel Demand for High-Tech Language Labs**

*Michelle R Davis, Education Week, 11 January 2010*

When students of Spanish teacher Sean M. Boettinger put on their headsets in his Maryland high school's language lab, their concentration heightens, he says.

The up-to-date digital equipment, says the teacher, keeps them engaged with teenage-friendly electronics, allows them to get more Spanish listening and speaking practice, and, most important, blocks out distractions.

"Particularly in classes that have a hard time paying attention, having those headphones on, and me being able to speak through that microphone directly into their ears with no outside noises, is a great focusing tool," says Boettinger, who teaches at Dr. Henry A. Wise Jr. High School in the 134,000-student Prince George's County district.

The push to install technology-rich language labs is growing, so much so in some places that parent fundraising organizations are making it the focus of their efforts. Educators who use the labs say that they allow students to spend significantly more time doing language-practice exercises, such as hearing themselves speak.

The labs also take away an age-old barrier students often face when trying to learn a language: embarrassment.

Read entire article: <http://www.edweek.org/dd/articles/2010/01/08/02languagelabs.h03.html>

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### **More language teachers needed: Union**

*Emma Pollard, ABC News, 18 January 2010*

The Queensland Teachers' Union (QTU) says state schools need more foreign language teachers.

The Queensland Government is considering making languages other than English compulsory for students in years six, seven and eight.

The Opposition has criticised the recent shift away from foreign languages.

QTU president Steve Ryan says schools need more resources.

"The reality is that there's not enough LOTE [Languages Other Than English] teachers in Queensland," he said.

"There's also a situation where schools need to have some flexibility around some students who may not be able to cope with English as a second language."

Source: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2010/01/18/2794957.htm>

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## **Foreign Languages Fade in Class — Except Chinese**

*Sam Dillon, New York Times, January 20, 2010*

Thousands of public schools stopped teaching foreign languages in the last decade, according to a government-financed survey — dismal news for a nation that needs more linguists to conduct its global business and diplomacy.

But another contrary trend has educators and policy makers abuzz: a rush by schools in all parts of America to offer instruction in Chinese.

Some schools are paying for Chinese classes on their own, but hundreds are getting some help. The Chinese government is sending teachers from China to schools all over the world — and paying part of their salaries.

At a time of tight budgets, many American schools are finding that offer too good to refuse.

No one keeps an exact count, but rough calculations based on the government's survey suggest that perhaps 1,600 American public and private schools are teaching Chinese, up from 300 or so a decade ago. And the numbers are growing exponentially.

Read entire article: <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/01/21/education/21chinese.html>

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## **Foreign languages are 'elitist' subjects**

### **A generation of children is being left behind**

*Graeme Paton, Telegraph (UK) 20 Jan 2010*

The dramatic collapse in the number of teenagers studying French, German and Spanish in state comprehensives means thousands of teenagers are automatically excluded from applying for top jobs, it was claimed.

Language experts said the vast majority of English state schools had now “abandoned” a Government target designed to ensure at least half of pupils took a GCSE in languages.

At many schools, the subject was being dropped in favour of easier courses to climb official league tables, it was disclosed.

CiLT, the National Centre for Languages, which carried out the study, said the subject was increasingly the preserve of pupils from independent and selective state grammar schools.

It left many comprehensive pupils at a huge disadvantage in the race for graduate jobs because many multinational companies demanded proficiency in at least one foreign language, it was claimed.

Some top universities - including University College London - are also requesting that students have at least a C-grade GCSE in languages before being considered.

Read entire article: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/educationnews/7036261/Foreign-languages-are-elitist-subjects.html>

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## **The Confucius connection ... hundreds of Scots pupils head for China**

*Andrew Denholm, The Herald, 24 Jan 2010*

A radical departure from the traditional school trip will this year involve hundreds of Scottish state and independent school pupils travelling to China to experience the country's language and culture.

For decades, exchange visits organised by Scottish schools have been dominated by travel to mainland Europe, with France, Germany and Italy among the most popular destinations.

However, the signing of a historic agreement between Learning And Teaching Scotland (LTS), the country's curriculum development body, and the Tianjin Municipal Education Commission, a Chinese government organisation, has changed that.

The "memorandum of understanding" will involve eight schools in Scotland which have already developed Chinese language and culture centres – known as Confucius Classroom Hubs – link up with seven schools in Tianjin, China's sixth-largest city.

Pupils and teachers from the schools – and others from the 12 local-authority areas they serve – will begin visits to Tianjin this year, with the first trip planned for March. A Chinese delegation will then visit Scotland in June. Scottish pupils in China will have the opportunity to take part in a range of activities and lessons, including daily morning exercises, as well as visiting the homes of Chinese students and touring the city, which is about 70 miles south-east of the capital, Beijing.

The trips are mainly funded by the Hanban, the executive body of the Chinese Language Council International – a non-governmental and non-profit public institution affiliated with the Chinese Ministry of Education.

The initiative shows how far relationships between China and the west have come over the past few years, and recognises the growing importance of China in the international marketplace.

Read more at <http://www.heraldscotland.com/news/education/the-confucius-connection-hundreds-of-scots-pupils-head-for-china-1.1000875>

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## **New home for French Aust preschool?**

*ABC News, 27 January 2010*

The ACT Government has found a potential new site for the French Australian preschool. The preschool's existing lease at Red Hill Primary School expires at the end of this year. The Government has identified a site behind the Griffith shops.

Chief Minister Jon Stanhope says the Government will fund the construction on the condition the preschool pays to fit-out the building.

"It's a process or a method that we've adopted in relation to other community facilities in the past," he said. "We believe it's quite appropriate in relation to something as important or as fundamental as child care."

Mr Stanhope says the Government will start consultation with retailers and residents.

Source: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2010/01/27/2802641.htm>

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## **Venture provides language learning via mobile phones**

*Lilly Vitorovich, Dow Jones Newswires, 01 February 2010*

Publisher Pearson PLC and Nokia Corp., the world's biggest mobile phone maker, said Monday they have set up a wireless education joint venture in China, aimed at attracting people who are studying and learning English.

The two companies hope the joint venture, Beijing Mobeledu Technologies, will accelerate the growth of mobile phone-delivered education service Mobeledu, which has been developed by Finland's Nokia.

Launched in China in 2007, Mobiledu is a mobile service which provides English-language learning materials and other educational content, from a variety of content providers, directly to mobile phones. Customers can access the content through an application preloaded on new Nokia handsets, or by visiting the service's mobile Web site and most other wireless application protocol, or WAP, portals in China.

Since its launch, Mobiledu has attracted 20 million subscribers in China, with 1.5 million people actively using the service each month. Mobiledu will continue to be delivered to customers in China through a range of channels, including Nokia's Ovi Store.

John Fallon, chief executive of Pearson's international Education business, said it is a "great opportunity to combine Pearson's English language learning and wider educational services with the mobile technology capabilities of Nokia to meet this demand and help a larger number of people achieve their aspirations."

Source: <http://www.totaltele.com/view.aspx?ID=452565>

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## **CELEBRATIONS**

### **International Mother Language Day**

*21 February 2010*

International Mother Language Day, proclaimed by the General Conference of UNESCO in November 1999, has been observed around the world yearly since February 2000 to promote linguistic and cultural diversity and multilingualism.

International Mother Language Day on 21 February 2010 provides an opportunity to celebrate the values of linguistic diversity and the importance of multilingual education.

Use this day to recognise the importance of language and literacy – and why not as a “curtain raiser” for Harmony Day in March – see below.

Read more at [http://portal.unesco.org/culture/en/ev.php-URL\\_ID=38724&URL\\_DO=DO\\_TOPIC&URL\\_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/culture/en/ev.php-URL_ID=38724&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html)

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### **Harmony Day**

*21 March 2010*

Harmony Day is supported by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) and celebrates the cohesive and inclusive nature of our nation, promoting the benefits of cultural and linguistic diversity and cross cultural interaction and understanding.

DIAC supports a range of community events and activities held to celebrate Harmony Day by providing free promotional products.

The key message of Harmony Day is Everyone Belongs. It's about community participation, inclusiveness, respect and a sense of belonging for everyone.

There is no limit to the range of activities that can be held for Harmony Day and we encourage schools, community groups, local government and businesses to get involved and actively support this day of celebration.

Read more at <http://www.harmony.gov.au/harmony-day/>

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## **LOCAL EVENTS**

## **ACT: Raising Children in More than One Language**

*21 February, University of Canberra, Bruce, ACT*

This is a free seminar from 1.30pm-4.30pm for parents, grand-parents, early childhood and preschool workers, teachers, and others interested in bilingual education

- Hear from parents who have raised their children in more than one language – and from the children themselves
- Discover more about the benefits of bilingual education
- Find out about opportunities for language learning and bilingual education in the ACT

Building 2, University of Canberra, Bruce. Enter from 'The Hub' – see map at <http://www.canberra.edu.au/university/maps>

Bookings essential: phone Marina on 6201 2483 or email [Mandy.Scott@canberra.edu.au](mailto:Mandy.Scott@canberra.edu.au)

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## **ACT: New bi-lingual Indonesian – English Pre-school**

The Australian Indonesian-Language Schools Association (AILSAs) Inc is pleased to announce to all parents who see the benefit of a bilingual environment for pre-schoolers' development that a bilingual (Indonesian/English) transition program for children aged 3-5 years will start in Term 1 2010.

The program will operate at the pre-school premises of Queanbeyan South Public School from 9 am to 3 pm on Monday of each week during term. The daily fee will be \$30 per child.

For more details and to put your child on the waiting list, email [admin@ailsa.org.au](mailto:admin@ailsa.org.au) with the following information: Child's name, date of birth, parent's name and address.

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## **Melbourne Language Picnic**

*Sunday 21 March 2010*

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>

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## **CONFERENCES**

## 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>

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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)
- 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](mailto:letters@acsso.org.au)

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