

LANGUAGES EDUCATION IN AUSTRALIA

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FUTURE-GAZING

Language tasters point to the future

Bernard Lane, The Australian, 21 April 2010

A NEW class of language learners is on the rise. They have an appetite for language, it's true, but they only want a taste: a semester or two is quite enough. The student hungry enough to consume a major has become a rare creature.

This is the trend discerned by British-based language academic Anne Pauwels, who returned to the University of Western Australia yesterday for a lecture on multilingualism in education.

"The good news is that more university students undertake some study of a language than, for example, 10 or 15 years ago," she told the HES.

"We underestimate how many students actually would like to learn something of a language."

Professor Pauwels, a former UWA arts dean now at the University of London, said language departments that were nimble and open to change could prosper with the rise of the new language student.

"Fifteen years ago, probably about 70 per cent of a typical language department enrolment was made up of students who had done year 12 in the language and who were going to major in that language," she said. "When you look at typical language departments now, the number of students that come in with year 12 language [can be] as low as 20-30 per cent.

"What we see is a trend for more students wanting to taste a language, so to speak ... [and] the proportion who major in a language is dropping, in some cases, quite dramatically."

Read entire article: <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/higher-education/language-tasters-point-to-the-future/story-e6frcjx-1225856114375>

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Practise French on your mobile phone

Simon Midgley, Times Online, 29 April 2010

A way to use mobile phones to practise French language skills has been pioneered by the Open University. It involves using a voice response system, which has helped students on an intermediate French course to work on their pronunciation and intonation.

The system was developed by Learnosity, an educational technology company.

Rhodri Thomas, senior project manager in the university's Learning Innovation Office, says that students are able to respond to verbal prompts as if they are out and about in France talking to local people. In the past students would have been given oral testing drills online or on DVDs.

Thomas says of the new system: "This is a lot more authentic in that you have to give a pretty much immediate response to the verbal prompt as opposed to when you use a DVD-Rom. With that you would have a bit of audio, be told what you need to say, have a look at the transcript and then practise a couple of times." A small group of students was tested using mobiles during an initial research study. Now the initiative is moving to a pilot phase in which the focus will switch to assessing students' oral skills via a mobile phone, desk phone, internet, iPhone or iPod touch.

The plan is to extend the e-assessment to a new French short course and to a course on English used for academic purposes.

Read entire article: http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/life_and_style/education/student/article7110705.ece

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Language Learning & Social Media

A unique mix of activities exploring the relationship of language learning and social media in the web 2.0 era: Participatory debates, award-winning competitions, policy recommendations and reports, scientific publications and field studies.

By placing "language learning and social media" at the core of the network, the 14 partner institutions of national, European and international reach will examine 6 key dimensions of this combination.

These fundamental dimensions are:

1. Language learning, social media and social inclusion
2. Language learning, social media and development of language resources
3. Language learning and teaching through social media in new EU countries: the case of Romania, Latvia and Poland
4. Language learning, social media and multilingualism
5. Language learning through social media: evolution of teaching practices
6. Language learning and teaching in formal and non formal contexts through ICT
7. Read more at: <http://www.elearningeuropa.info/languagelearning>

Follow on Twitter: http://twitter.com/languages_web2

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Asia focus a smart call for schools

Sid Myer, the Age, 3 May 2010

Given the 21st-century world order, it's a clever move to require the study of Asia in the new national curriculum.

AS PROFESSOR Ross Garnaut has said, a new world order with China as a great power will require us to be cleverer and more subtle to achieve our strategic objectives. Our new big boy on the block - and geographically closer than we are used to - will be a country we have had very little to do with in our comparatively short history.

China is a big part of our future, but it is not all of it. There is India, there are the 10 countries of ASEAN, and Japan continues to be our biggest export market. We are free to view our geography as either a disadvantage - or a magnificent advantage.

What this means for schools and the new national curriculum is controversial for some, but there is general agreement that we need to make the most of this changing future. We need to be better informed, more able to adapt and adopt new ways of thinking, and to encourage young Australians to achieve what the Americans are now calling "global competence".

The values of societies change over time. The one truth about school education is that its fundamental goal is to equip our young people for their future. At one time, we expected our children to learn the rivers of the world and Latin. In the Middle Ages, it was astronomy and rhetoric. Girls learnt needlework as a compulsory subject until the 1970s, boys studied metal or woodwork. Many of us recall the debate over the inclusion of computers and information technology.

There is no locked iron box called "The Curriculum" containing the material we must always know - rather curriculums respond to our changing needs.

Recently, Australia's education ministers signed the "Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians", which included the goal that "all young Australians become ... active and informed citizens". Besides acting with moral and ethical integrity, being committed to national values of democracy, equity and justice, and participating in Australia's civic life, the ministers defined "active and informed citizens" as being able to relate to and communicate across cultures, "especially the cultures and countries of Asia".

This has led to the inclusion in our new national curriculum of the need for all students to gain knowledge, skills and understanding about Asia.

This makes sense. Australia's future is inextricably linked to Asia. By the time a five-year-old starting school today enters the workforce, China and India are predicted to be the world's major economies. Already, China has tripled per capita income in less than a generation and eased 300 million out of poverty. India is home to four of the world's top 20 billionaires, while 200 million Indians earn on average more than the average Australian.

Read entire article: <http://www.theage.com.au/opinion/society-and-culture/asia-focus-a-smart-call-for-schools-20100502-u195.html>

Sid Myer is chairman of the National Asian Languages and Studies in Schools Program Reference Group and of Asialink at the University of Melbourne.

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ASIA LITERACY

"Learning Asia" special supplement in The Australian on Friday 21 May 2010

Asialink and the Asia Education Foundation have aligned with The Australian newspaper to produce a six-page Special Supplement promoting Asia studies and languages to a national audience. This feature will publish as a 6 page stand alone feature entitled "Learning Asia" on Friday 21st May.

This report will promote the value of teaching and learning about Asia in our primary and secondary schools, and tertiary institutions. It will also feature comment from leading academics and business leaders on the future of education as well as a review of current programs.

Editorial will feature individual stories of companies' involvement in developing Asia literacy, articles about action in Australian schools, achievements in Asia studies and languages, features on both the business and education Alliances and why an Asia literate Australian curriculum is important.

This initiative will provide a range of information relevant to all teachers and learners of Asian languages and studies – and to all parents and families in reinforcing the importance of these aspects of learning for all young Australians.

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Becoming Asia Literate Grants to Schools: Round Two now open!

These direct grants to primary and secondary schools in each state and territory promote the teaching and learning of Asian languages and/or the studies of Asia in their schools, for the target countries of China, Indonesia, Japan and Korea.

Eligibility for these grants includes all Australian primary and secondary schools.

Applications opened online on 4 May 2010 - and close online at 5pm EST Friday 28 May 2010.

An Information Pack to assist you is available at
http://www.asiaeducation.edu.au/for_teachers/nalssp_grants/information_pack_revised_version.html

To discuss your Round 2 application, contact the BALGS Help Desk on (03) 8344 3699 or email
asialiterate@asialink.unimelb.edu.au

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National History Challenge 2010

Asia & Australia category - open to students in Years 5-12

The Asia Education Foundation is sponsoring a prize in the Asia and Australia category of the 2010 National History Challenge. This year's theme is Celebrations, Memories and History.

Students can explore Australia's shifting identity by investigating new customs, traditions and beliefs brought to Australia by people from Asia who over time have arrived on our shores as traders, immigrants and refugees.

Students from Years 5 to 12 - 19 years of age or younger - in Australian schools are invited to submit their research - and can progress from School to Regional, State and Territory and National finals. The National winners in the Asia and Australia category will receive a cash prize of \$300 and travel to Canberra to attend the National Presentation Ceremony in Mural Hall, Parliament House.

Closing date for entries is 27 August, 2010.

For more information go to <http://historychallenge.org.au/students/special-categories/asia-and-australia/>

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Resource for Teachers

"Pacific Neighbours – understanding the Pacific Islands"

Teachers of year 7 to 10 students are invited to check out this AusAID funded resource on the Asia-Pacific region.

This resource can help students to develop their knowledge and understanding of the Pacific region, its history and geography, its political and social development, and its people and their cultures.

It is accompanied by a professional learning program for teachers available online at
http://www.asiaeducation.edu.au/for_teachers/curriculum_resources/other/globalisation/globalisation_landing_page.html

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Asia Education Foundation Study Tours

Registrations for June-July Tours closing 14 May 2010

Registrations for AEF Study Tours during June/July term break will close on the 14th May.

These include a China study tour for Business educators focusing on China's economic boom period since mid 1970's to now. If you register yourself plus a friend or colleague by the 14th May, the AEF study tour team will cover the costs of the China tourist visa fees, for both of you.

There is also a study tour for school leaders interested in developments in aspects of educating for excellence and digital learning in Hong Kong and South Korea.

Please register as soon as possible to avoid disappointment. Registration forms and program itineraries for the above tours as well as other AEF Study Tours 2010 are available from

<http://www.asiaeducation.edu.au/studytours>

For further information, contact Hilary Smith or Rene Landsman on 03 8344 4800.

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New China study tour for Victorian educators

September- October 2010

Registrations are now open for a new Asia Education Foundation study tour to China tailored specifically Victorian educators in September/October 2010. Delivered in partnership with the Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, the tour will encompass both contemporary and historic China with particular focus on opportunities to engage with Chinese schools and students.

Detailed itinerary is now available on AEF website: this and other AEF Study Tours on offer at

<http://www.asiaeducation.edu.au/studytours>

Enquiries: Email studytours@asialink.unimelb.edu.au

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INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES

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."

In August last year, the Federal Government acknowledged a report which found 110 Indigenous languages are at risk of disappearing and committed \$9.3 million towards saving them. Ms Klesch said the money has made a slight difference, but does not go anywhere near far enough. "There is just not enough speakers left to document and record these languages," she said.

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

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Indian Tribes Go in Search of Their Lost Languages

Patricia Cohen, New York Times, 5 April 2010

As far as the records show, no one has spoken Shinnecock or Unkechaug, languages of Long Island's Indian tribes, for nearly 200 years. Now Stony Brook University and two of the Indian nations are initiating a joint project to revive these extinct tongues, using old documents like a vocabulary list that Thomas Jefferson wrote during a visit in 1791.

The goal is language resuscitation and enlisting tribal members from this generation and the next to speak them, said representatives from the tribes and Stony Brook's Southampton campus.

Chief Harry Wallace, the elected leader of the Unkechaug Nation, said that for tribal members, knowing the language is an integral part of understanding their own culture, past and present.

"When our children study their own language and culture, they perform better academically," he said. "They have a core foundation to rely on."

The Long Island effort is part of a wave of language reclamation projects undertaken by American Indians in recent years. For many tribes language is a cultural glue that holds a community together, linking generations and preserving a heritage and values. Bruce Cole, the former chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities, which sponsors language preservation programs, has called language "the DNA of a culture."

Of the more than 300 indigenous languages spoken in the United States, only 175 remain, according to the Indigenous Language Institute. This non-profit group estimates that without restoration efforts, no more than 20 will still be spoken in 2050.

Read entire article:

<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/04/06/books/06language.html?scp=9&sq=languages%20education&st=cse>

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NEWS FROM HERE AND THERE

Western Australia: Geraldton 'an ideal Indonesian hub'

ABC News, 23 March 2010

Labor's spokesman for multicultural interests, John Hyde, has called on the State Government to make Geraldton a specialist centre for the teaching of Bahasa.

The former John Wilcox College teacher says the recent construction of four language laboratories at the school makes it an ideal choice to become a 'hub high school' for Indonesia's official language.

The Labor MP's call coincides with this week's visit to Geraldton by a delegation from the Indonesian Consul General.

Mr Hyde says by designating a Geraldton secondary school as a language hub, more primary schools will be encouraged to teach the language.

"There are tremendous education advantages in the many students who are studying languages, such as Indonesian at primary school, being able to continue their studies with a real native teacher in secondary school," he said.

Read more at: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2010/03/23/2854092.htm>

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USA: Listening to - and Saving - the World's Languages

Sam Roberts, New York Times, 28 April 2010

The chances of overhearing a conversation in Vlashki, a variant of Istro-Romanian, are greater in Queens than in the remote mountain villages in Croatia that immigrants now living in New York left years ago.

At a Roman Catholic Church in the Morrisania section of the Bronx, Mass is said once a month in Garifuna, an Arawakan language that originated with descendants of African slaves shipwrecked near St. Vincent in the Caribbean

and later exiled to Central America. Today, Garifuna is virtually as common in the Bronx and in Brooklyn as in Honduras and Belize.

And Rego Park, Queens, is home to Husni Husain, who, as far he knows, is the only person in New York who speaks Mamuju, the Austronesian language he learned growing up in the Indonesian province of West Sulawesi. Mr. Husain, 67, has nobody to talk to, not even his wife or children.

"My wife is from Java, and my children were born in Jakarta — they don't associate with the Mamuju," he said. "I don't read books in Mamuju. They don't publish any. I only speak Mamuju when I go back or when I talk to my brother on the telephone."

These are not just some of the languages that make New York the most linguistically diverse city in the world. They are part of a remarkable trove of endangered tongues that have taken root in New York — languages born in every corner of the globe and now more commonly heard in various corners of New York than anywhere else.

Read entire article: <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/04/29/nyregion/29lost.html>

See also associated article: <http://cityroom.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/04/28/land-of-lonely-tongues/?ref=nyregion>

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Shanghai Is Trying to Untangle the Mangled English of Chinglish

Andrew Jacobs, New York Times, 2 May 2010

For English speakers with subpar Chinese skills, daily life in China offers a confounding array of choices. At banks, there are machines for "cash withdrawing" and "cash recycling." The menus of local restaurants might present such delectables as "fried enema," "monolithic tree mushroom stem squid" and a mysterious thirst-quencher known as "The Jew's Ear Juice."

Those who have had a bit too much monolithic tree mushroom stem squid could find themselves requiring roomier attire: extra-large sizes sometimes come in "fatso" or "lard bucket" categories. These and other fashions can be had at the clothing chain known as Scat.

Go ahead and snicker, although by last Saturday's opening of the Expo 2010 in Shanghai, drawing more than 70 million visitors over its six-month run, these and other uniquely Chinese maladaptations of the English language were supposed to have been largely excised.

Well, that at least is what the Shanghai Commission for the Management of Language Use has been trying to accomplish during the past two years.

Fortified by an army of 600 volunteers and a politburo of adroit English speakers, the commission has fixed more than 10,000 public signs (farewell "Teliot" and "urine district"), rewritten English-language historical placards and helped hundreds of restaurants recast offerings.

Read entire article: <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/05/03/world/asia/03chinglish.html?scp=30&sq=languages%20education&st=cse>

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Georgia: English ousts Russian in ex-Soviet Georgia's schools

West Australian, 4 May 2010 (AFP)

At schools across ex-Soviet Georgia, English is ousting Russian as the pro-Western authorities mount an ambitious campaign to promote the language of Shakespeare. Keen to build closer ties with the West and amid continued tensions with Moscow after the 2008 Georgia-Russia war, Georgia's government seems determined to end Russian's dominance as the country's most-spoken foreign language.

And young Georgians, anxious to learn one of the most widely spoken languages in the world, couldn't be happier.

"Every Georgian needs to know English. It is impossible to get a proper education and build a successful career without knowing English," said 16-year-old Mariam Sulashvili during a break from her English classes at high school number 47 in central Tbilisi.

Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili, a fluent English speaker himself, has led the charge for English, saying earlier this year that Georgia needs a "linguistic revolution."

A string of new measures are being taken to help promote English. Earlier this year, Georgia's education ministry launched a programme to bring 1,000 native English teachers to schools across the country starting in September.

From 2011, English classes will become compulsory from the first grade in all Georgian schools.

Read entire article: <http://au.news.yahoo.com/thewest/lifestyle/a/-/lifestyle/7159350/english-ousts-russian-in-exsoviet-georgias-schools/>

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CONFERENCES

Equal educational access & opportunity

Alliance for Multilingual Multicultural Education (AMME)

19-21 May 2010, Albuquerque, New Mexico, USA

Speakers include Assistant Secretary of Elementary and Secondary Education, Dr. Thelma Meléndez, and Juan Sepulveda, Director of the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans.

Presenters also include many scholars, activists, and civil rights advocates presenting the latest policy, innovative pedagogy and best practices in the fields of bilingualism, multilingualism, and second language education for ELLs.

Information about the conference can be found at <http://www.ammeglobal.org>.

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International Conference on Language, Education and the Millenium Development Goals

9-11 November, Bangkok, Thailand

Join with representatives from government and intergovernmental agencies, NGOs, academics and local community organizations during a three-day forum to dialogue about the state of development of ethnolinguistic minorities, the relevance of local languages, and how to develop programmes and policies that better reach these underserved groups.

Languages are more than tools for, and means of communication, they help shape the identity of individuals and groups, as well as serving as a key element in social integration and cultural development. As such, languages are also strategically important for the attainment of internationally agreed upon goals such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Education for All (EFA).

Read more at: http://www.unescobkk.org/no_cache/education/appeal/appeal-news/appeal-news-details/article/international-conference-on-language-education-and-the-millenium-developemnt-goals-2nd-announceme/

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REMINDERS

4-5 May - Glocalisation of New Literacies - Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia - <http://seminar.spaceutm.edu.my/lsp2010/index.html>

14 May - Modern Language Teachers' Association of Victoria Annual Conference - Melbourne, VIC - <http://www.mltav.asn.au>

21-22 May - Multilingualism & Creativity: Theory & Practice of Language Education - Kaunas, Lithuania - <http://www.lkpa.uki.vu.lt/index.php?cid=7&lang=en>

1-2 June - International Conference on Linguistics, Literature & Culture - Penang, Malaysia - <http://www.usm.my/iclic2010/>

7 June - Who needs languages? - Jyväskylä, Finland - <https://www.jyu.fi/hum/laitokset/solki/en/conference2010/index.html>

24-25 June - (Re)-Constructing Multiculturalism - Cardiff, Wales - <http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/gradschools/gsh/gsh%20whats%20on/interdis%20events%20sem/Re-Constructing%20Multiculturalism%20Conference/reconmulti-cfa.html>

2-3 July - Cutting Edges: Creativity in language teaching and teacher training - Canterbury, UK - <http://www.canterbury.ac.uk/arts-humanities/english-language-studies/LanguageStudiesConf.aspx>

4-7 July- Annual Congress in Applied Linguistics - Brisbane QLD - <http://www.alaa2010congress.webs.com/>

5 July - Lancaster University Conference in Linguistics and English Language - Lancaster, UK - <http://www.lancs.ac.uk/fass/events/laelpgconference/index.htm>

5-8 July - Biennial Conference of Asian Studies Association of Australia - Adelaide, SA - <http://www.adelaide.edu.au/asaa2010/>

7 July-10 August - ACTA International TESOL Conference - Gold Coast, QLD - <http://www.astmanagement.com.au/ACTA10/>

19-20 July - Melbourne Conference on China - Melbourne, VIC - <http://www.chinastudies.unimelb.edu.au/conferences/2010/index.php>

25-28 July - Awareness Matters: Language, Culture, Literacy - Kassel, Germany - <http://www.uni-kassel.de/hrz/db4/extern/ala2010/ct/>

31 July - International Conference on Japanese Language Education - Taipei, Taiwan - <http://icjle2010.nccu.edu.tw/main.php>

27-29 August - ASLIA National Conference - Brisbane, QLD - <http://www.asliaconference.org.au/>

1-2 September - Languages for the 21st Century: Training, Impact and Influence - Sheffield, UK - <http://www.llas.ac.uk/events/6142>

16-18 September - Language Teaching in Increasingly Multilingual Environments - Warsaw, Poland - <http://www.ils.uw.edu.pl/LTIME.html>

21-23 September - ICT in Analysis, Teaching, & Learning of Language International Conference - Kyoto, Japan - <http://www11.ocn.ne.jp/~iskwshin/ictatl.html>

23-24 September - International Online Language Conference - <http://www.iolc2010.ioksp.com/>

29 September-2 October - Australian Conference of Celtic Studies - Sydney, NSW - http://www.arts.usyd.edu.au/celtic_studies/index.php?page=events

1-4 October - National Conference for Community Languages and ESOL - Dunedin, New Zealand - <http://www.clesol.org.nz/2010/home.html>

29-31 October - International Postgraduate Conference in Translation and Interpreting - Manchester, UK - <http://www.ipciti.org.uk/>

5-6 November - AUSIT Biennial National Conference - Fremantle, WA - <http://ausitconference.org/>

1-2 December - Malaysia International Conference on Foreign Languages - Serdang, Malaysia - <http://www.fbmk.upm.edu.my/micfl2010/>

2-4 December - Biennial Conference: Centre for Language Studies - Singapore - <http://www.fas.nus.edu.sg/cls/clasic2010/index.htm>

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ACSSO EMAIL NEWSLETTERS

- Australian Education Digest : <http://www.acsso.org.au/australian-education-digest/> (weekly)
- International News Roundup : <http://www.acsso.org.au/roundup/> (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/public-education-voice> (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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