



Asia Education Foundation

Asia Literacy on business agenda

For immediate release
21 March, 2010

Businesses and schools join forces tomorrow (Monday) in a unique new project aimed at increasing young Australians' interest in and understanding about Asia.

The *Asia Literacy Ambassadors – Partnering Businesses & Schools* project, to be launched at a national summit of education and business leaders tomorrow, brings together professionals from a range of sectors and school communities to increase awareness about the value of Asia skills.

The project builds on the Business Alliance for Asia Literacy, established in May 2009 with the support of 68 major Australian corporations and peak bodies representing over 400,000 Australian businesses.

“Asia literacy means having knowledge, skills and understanding about the diverse countries of the Asia region,” says patron of the new scheme, businessman and chairman of Asialink and the Asia Society, Mr Sid Myer.

“China is a big part of the new picture we must imagine of our future in Australia - but the entire region will be important to us: the dynamic growth of India, the 10 vibrant countries of ASEAN, and there is our vital relationship with the second largest economy in the world, Japan.

He said Australia needed skills to maximise opportunities and mitigate risk in business and in solving global issues.

“We are free to view our geography as either our disadvantage – or our magnificent advantage,” Mr Myer said. “This remarkable project aims to inspire our future leaders to develop the skills needed in this Asia Century.”

Under the Australian Government-funded Asia Literacy Ambassadors scheme, skilled professionals are identified and matched to secondary schools across Australia. By sharing their own experiences and expertise, Ambassadors help students better understand the diverse career and life opportunities available to individuals who are knowledgeable about Asia, who speak an Asian language and have the skills and dispositions needed to effectively engage with the people and cultures of Asia, off-shore and domestically. The program is managed by the Asia Education Foundation.

A new web page has been launched to coincide with the project:
<http://ambassador.asiaeducation.edu.au/>

For Media inquiries and interview requests: please contact Jennifer Conley: 0406 857 856; (03) 9690 9007