

Media Release – NALSSP Reference Group 10 November 2010

Chair of the National Asian Languages and Studies in Schools Program (NALSSP) Reference Group, Mr Sid Myer, welcomed the announcement on 10 November 2010 by the Hon Peter Garrett MP, Minister for School Education, of successful schools under Round Two of the *Becoming Asia Literate: Grants to Schools* element of the NALSSP.

The NALSSP is designed to increase the number of young Australians skilled in the languages and understanding the cultures of China, Indonesia, Japan and Korea. The Australian Government is providing \$62.4 million in funding over four years for the NALSSP, a key initiative underpinning the Government's commitment to languages education.

Mr Myer congratulated the schools that were successful in receiving funding under Round Two of the *Becoming Asia Literate: Grants to Schools*.

'These schools, in implementing their projects, have a great opportunity to showcase innovative activities that will contribute to the achievement of NALSSP program objectives. It is exciting that activities funded under the NALSSP are having an impact at the local school level'.

Mr Myer also encouraged schools that were unsuccessful for funding in Round Two to apply for Round Three which will open in May 2011.

All Australian governments have committed to the NALSSP and an aspirational target that, by 2020, at least 12 per cent of students complete Year 12 with a fluency in one of the target Asian languages at a level sufficient for engaging in trade and commerce in Asia and/or university study.

Mr Myer highlighted the urgency of sustained long-term Government commitment to the NALSSP beyond 2012. 'The NALSSP target of 12 per cent of students fluent in an Asian language by 2020 is a positive and constructive step towards an Asia-literate Australia. However, It is clear that all young Australians need to be Asia-skilled with knowledge of the societies, histories and geographies of the diverse countries of Asia to position themselves, and our country, for success in what is increasingly called the "Asian century"'.

The NALSSP Reference Group was established in May 2009 to provide expert advice to the Australian Government, as well as high-level strategic oversight across all elements of the NALSSP.

Further information on the NALSSP and a list of the successful schools can be found at www.deewr.gov.au/Schooling/NALSSP.

Contact: Kathe Kirby, Asia Education Foundation, 0409411504, 03 83443592,
k.kirby@asialink.unimelb.edu.au