



## Push for better deal on languages teaching

**May 12, 2008**

Canberra languages educators intend to strike while the iron is hot in their efforts to get greater emphasis on languages in the nation's capital, the Canberra Multicultural Community Forum's Education Adviser, Mandy Scott, said today.

Dr Scott was speaking at the announcement of the second Canberra Region Languages Forum, to be held at the University of Canberra on Sunday, May 18. The forum follows a meeting held late last year at which one of the nation's foremost linguists, Professor Michael Clyne, of the University of Melbourne, said Australia was in danger of reverting to assimilationist, monocultural attitudes that would damage its standing in a 21<sup>st</sup> century globalised world.

However, Dr Scott said there have been encouraging developments since that meeting. "I believe in Kevin Rudd we have a Prime Minister who fully understands the importance of competency in languages other than English," she said. The 2020 summit also highlighted the importance of language skills for global engagement in trade, security and interpersonal communication.

"The ACT Government has also shown interest in raising the profile of language teaching in our schools, and we welcome its involvement in Sunday's forum."

The forum will be opened by the University of Canberra's Pro Vice Chancellor (Education) Professor Carole Kayrooz and Ms Mary Porter MLA, representing Chief Minister John Stanhope. It will hear reports on developments since the last forum before short presentations on bilingual programs in ACT public schools, ethnic schools, and how multilingual community radio is playing a part in language teaching.

However the forum will not be a talkfest, Dr Scott said. Ample time will be set aside for discussion and deciding on future action. "The forum is an opportunity for everyone involved in languages education, from preschool to university, and members of our multilingual community to work together to further promote language learning in the ACT."

The forum is jointly supported by the University of Canberra and the Canberra Multicultural Community Forum.

**The media is welcome to attend the forum which is being held in Building 2, University of Canberra on Sunday May 18 from 1pm to 5pm.**

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or

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