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## CMCF hails language teaching decision

**November 14, 2007**

The Canberra Multicultural Community Forum has applauded the decision of the ACT Government to provide \$300,000 for the training of teachers in order to ensure all public schools will be able to offer a program in a language other than English by 2010

Forum chair Sam Wong said the move was timely coming only a few weeks after a languages forum, held at the University of Canberra, had highlighted the shortage of appropriately qualified teachers as the major obstacle to providing quality language programs in ACT schools.

“Despite its importance, language education has been sorely neglected for many years, particularly in the public system,” he said.

“Under this proposal all ACT children, but especially those from homes where only English is spoken, will have the chance to enrich their general education, enlarge their view of the world and improve their English and literacy skills – all things which educators know exposure to a foreign language brings.”

Mr Wong said that starting a language early gives children a basis for further language learning. “Research shows that people who already have two languages find it easier to learn a third,” he said.

He paid tribute to CMCF committee member and education adviser Mandy Scott. “She was the organiser of the languages forum and the driving force behind our efforts to have second language teaching gain the recognition it deserves,” he said.

“Now the Stanhope Government’s farsighted decision is a tremendous start to ensuring ACT children will have the chance to take their place on the international stage with the skills Australia desperately needs as we progress through an increasingly globalised 21<sup>st</sup> century.”

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