

**SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON
EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND WORKPLACE RELATIONS**

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
BUDGET ESTIMATES 2009-10**

Outcome 2

DEEWR Question No. EW0383_10

Senator Cormann asked on 3 June 2009, EEWR Hansard page 31.

Question

Year 12 students graduating school with a second language.

The report, *Languages in crisis: a rescue plan for Australia*, indicates the percentage of year 12 students graduating with a second language has fallen from 40 per cent in the 1960s to 30 per cent in 2007. Could you take on notice whether:

- (i) those figures that are quoted in the report are correct; and
- (ii) what is being done to reverse the trend?

Answer

- (i) The report, *Languages in crisis: a rescue plan for Australia*, released by the Group of Eight in June 2007, stated that the percentage of Year 12 students graduating with a second language had fallen from 40 per cent in the 1960s to 13 per cent in 2007 (page 1).

The Department does not have data regarding student participation in language courses in the 1960s.

- (ii) The importance of languages education is acknowledged in the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians*, agreed to by all Australian education ministers in December 2008, which identifies languages, especially Asian languages, as a key learning area.

The Government provides significant funding to state and territory government and non-government education authorities to support the learning of all languages in Australian schools and after-hours community languages schools. From 2009, funding for languages education in Australian government schools is being provided through the National Education Agreement. Over the 2009–2012 quadrennium, the Government is providing \$56.4 million through the *Schools Assistance Act 2008* to support the teaching of languages in non-government schools.

Under the Government's National Asian Languages and Studies in Schools Program (NALSSP), \$62.4 million has been committed over four years to increase the number of students who undertake studies of the languages and cultures of our Asian neighbours, namely China, Indonesia, Japan and Korea.