

## THE PLEDGE

### FOR ASIAN LANGUAGES IN AUSTRALIAN SCHOOLS

#### Given:

- Learning languages of the Asian region enables young Australians to directly participate in and deeply connect with Asia, providing benefits throughout their schooling, career and lives;
- Australia has experienced over [a decade of stagnation and regression](#) with respect to the teaching and learning of languages in schools — particularly at upper secondary level;
- Australia ranked second last among 64 countries in [the most recent \(2018\) OECD survey of second language study by 15-year-old \(Year 10\) students](#) – with only 36.4% of Australian Year 10 students studying a second language in school;
- The number of [Year 12 students enrolled in languages in Australian schools](#) has declined from 11.3% in 2010 to 8.2% in 2022;
- The study of the three priority Asian languages – Japanese, Chinese and Indonesian – by Australian Year 12 students is [at its lowest levels in over a decade](#), with 3.7% of Year 12 students studying these languages in 2022, down from 5.1% in 2010; and
- The number of students studying other priority Asian languages – such as Korean and Hindi – at Year 12 level in Australian schools remains exceedingly small.

#### We are calling for:

1. **Creation** of a national policy and strategy to increase the diversity of language learning in Australian schools.
2. **Renewal** of a systematic, national approach to the teaching Asian languages in Australian primary and secondary schools.
3. **Restoration** of funding for the teaching of Asian languages in Australian schools
  - **bring back** federal funding for the teaching and learning of Asian languages in Australian schools at a level of **\$20 per Australian school student per year** – equivalent to [the level prevailing between 1995 and 2002](#); and
  - **create** new funding sources for the teaching of Asian languages in Australian schools through state and territory governments, not-for-profits and the private sector.

*This pledge was endorsed by the Acicis [National Reference Group](#) on 30 October 2023 at the 2023 Acicis Annual General Meeting.*