

**SPEECH BY  
MR HIEU VAN LE  
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA  
CHAIRMAN, SOUTH AUSTRALIAN MULTICULTURAL &  
ETHNIC AFFAIRS COMMISSION  
AT THE  
AWARDS PRESENTATION AT THE ETHNIC SCHOOLS  
CONFERENCE AND ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING  
UNION HOUSE, UNIVERSITY OF ADELAIDE, ADELAIDE  
SATURDAY 15 AUGUST 2009**

I'm delighted to be here – not just in my formal capacity as Patron of the Ethnic Schools Association, but also as a huge fan of ethnic schools generally.

I think you all do a fantastic work.

Through your teaching, you open up young hearts and minds, and you nurture a terrific range of languages and cultures.

This plays a crucial role in maintaining our State's cultural breadth and the much-admired model of multiculturalism we've built up, here, over many decades.

A recent State Government survey found that almost 90 per cent of South Australians see cultural diversity as a "positive influence" in the community.

I believe that – in a fundamental way – everyone here today has helped bring about that very high level of support.

Today's conference and annual general meeting is, of course, a special one.

Because, this weekend, we're celebrating the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the Ethnic Schools Association of South Australia.

Ministers Atkinson and Lomax-Smith generously hosted a very buoyant reception at Parliament House last night to mark that milestone.

I must say that I greatly enjoyed hearing about the history of the Association, meeting some of the people behind its success and, of course, talking about the bright future of ethnic schooling.

At last night's reception, one theme came through very strongly.

And that theme was that the many achievements of the Association have very much been built on the dedicated, day-to-day efforts of you – our ethnic-school teachers.

You bring exceptional skill and passion to the task of teaching.

And I believe you positively influence young students – and some not so young students – more than you even realise.

Your work has its traditions in the countless ethnic schools that have existed in South Australia since virtually the start of European settlement in the 1830s.

In 2009, the scope of your work is amazing – teaching nearly 50 languages, at 139 schools, to a total of almost 8,000 students.

In a moment, we'll be seeing and hearing from the very best teachers as part of the awarding of certificates and awards.

But – in closing and in advance – I want to congratulate every winner, every nominee, and every single teacher here today, on your magnificent efforts.

As Lieutenant Governor, Chairman of SAMEAC and Patron of the Ethnic Schools Association of South Australia, I commend you, I thank you and I wish you all the very best for the future.

Thank you.