LANGUAGE STUDENTS WIN MINISTER’S AWARDS

Ten of the state’s most outstanding students of community languages will tonight receive excellence awards from Education and Training Minister Verity Firth.

Ms Firth will present the Minister’s 2009 Achievement Awards for Excellence in Student Achievement (Community Languages Schools) at a ceremony in Sydney to six junior and four senior students.

“Each year more than 30,000 school-aged students study at least one of 47 languages, including Chinese, Greek and Italian, at more than 440 locations in NSW,” Ms Firth said.

“These awards recognise students who excel at studying a language other than English.”

“The Minister’s Award recognises both their excellence in language learning and their contribution to their communities.”

Ms Firth said community languages schools offered learning opportunities in an authentic cultural context.

“Under the NSW Community Languages Schools Program, students learn the language from native or near native speakers,” she said.

“They have their learning reinforced in the home environment and they attend community functions and meet community members who are part of that culture.”

“In this globalised world it is becoming more and more relevant to speak a language other than English.”

The achievements of a further 120 students will be acknowledged through the presentation of Highly Commended and Commended Awards.

Ms Firth said the NSW Government supports schools through professional development opportunities for teachers, funding grants and free access to public school facilities to operate their classes.

“This program represents a true partnership between government and community at the local level,” said Ms Firth.
Recipients of the 2009 Minister’s Awards for Excellence in Student Achievement (Community Languages Schools) are:

**Senior section:**
- Joanna Ding, Sydney Yu Cai Chinese Language School
- Jing San, Mingder Chinese School
- Tracey Sein Kay Yeung, Ambassadors Multicultural Chinese School (Asquith Branch)
- Arachchi Buwaneka, North Parramatta Sinhala School

**Junior section:**
- Gabrielle Liong, Ambassadors Multicultural Chinese School (Asquith Branch)
- Evan Watt-Smith, Connell’s Point Greek Afternoon School
- Matthew Michelini, Comitato Assistenza Italiani (Co As It). Out of School Hours Program
- Pavel Nikiforov, Maroubra Russian School Inc
- Jussi Jenssen, Swedish School in Sydney Inc
- Kannan Subapriyan, Tamil Study Centre, Homebush