

DEMOCRATS MEDIA

TUESDAY 5 JUNE 2007

DR ERICA LEWIN

LEAD SENATE CANDIDATE, AUSTRALIAN DEMOCRATS WA DIVISION

LANGUAGES IN A COSMOPOLITAN AUSTRALIA

English is a global language, but it is not the only language we need! The reality is that Australia continues to engage increasingly in international relations, and language plays a key role in eliminating barriers to trade and information.

“The demonstrated decrease in the study of a second language at school and at university is not in the interests of a cosmopolitan Australian society,” said Dr Erica Lewin, Australian Democrats WA spokesperson and lead Senate Candidate in Western Australia, referring to a trend that has surpassed crisis point.

“There is a strong argument to consider the proposal by Australia’s Group of Eight universities for mandatory learning of foreign languages from primary school to Year 10,” continued Dr Lewin.

The Australian Democrats would welcome strategies for increased incentives to study languages at university and a community campaign promoting the benefits of speaking a foreign language.

Such an approach reinforces the cultural diversity of a cosmopolitan Australian population and will reinforce the economic benefits of cultural diversity that are often overlooked or underestimated. Dealing with overseas suppliers and customers in the business sector makes language a crucial tool for success. Through languages we learn new histories, cultures and traditions and also different ways of thinking and working.

“The Australian Democrats have consistently supported the maintenance of a strong multicultural/multilingual public sector including schooling at all levels through school curriculums,” concluded Dr Lewin.

CONTACT: ERICA LEWIN Mbl. 0423130054



Authorised by Pat Olver 113 Naturaliste Blvd ILUKA WA 6028