

The Rudd legacy on language

Bruce McDougall
Education Reporter

MANDARIN is becoming a centre-piece of foreign language teaching in NSW public schools, with Chinese language teachers being brought to Australia and at least one Australian teacher setting up in China.

It is part of a Department of Education and Training push to put Mandarin at the forefront of language teaching in NSW public schools.

So far 25 primary and secondary schools have linked with schools in the Yangzhou province and in Shanghai's Pudong District.

Mandarin is a language used by the Prime Minister Kevin Rudd.

Almost 30 students and teachers from Georges River College campuses in Sydney's south left for China this week to visit a sister school and study with Chinese pupils. Another 36 students and teachers from Sydney's west will travel to China tomorrow.

Mandarin teachers are working in

NSW state schools while teachers in China give visiting Sydney pupils language lessons as well as training local teachers and students in English.

Education Minister Verity Firth said yesterday Asia was critical to the future prosperity of NSW.

"It's important our students are familiar with Asian languages and culture," she said.

Sydney regional director Phil Lambert said schools used technology such as video-conferencing and the internet to link with China.

Penshurst Girls' Campus principal Anne Ross said most of the students who went to China were not from an Asian background.

"These are students who are interested in immersing themselves in the Chinese culture and taking part in lessons with their sister-school peers," Ms Ross said.

Board of Studies data showed Chinese with 1243 enrolments in the HSC is now the third most popular language after Japanese and French.



Smoke and mirrors: Random Acts of Elevator Music – Matt Adair and Nick Wilson – serenade workers in a lift in George St yesterday
Picture: Justin Lloyd

Lift music with presence to serenade the workers

Stephen Downie

TALK about uplifting music. Two guys in suits, armed with a laptop and a keyboard, are infiltrating office lifts.

They could be there any day, any time. So long as it's in work hours.

Called Random Acts Of Elevator Music, the project is a collaboration between Melbourne musicians Nick Wilson and Matt Adair.

"The idea is that we can just walk in and be a part of the normal office environment," Wilson said yesterday.

"The keyboard becomes a focal point and forces people to start conversations and break down that awkwardness of being in a very small room.

"Sometimes we see people get out

and they start talking to each other, saying "What was that all about". They've bonded over the experience."

And you won't hear musak versions of Celine Dion's *My Heart Will Go On* or *The Girl From Ipanema*.

The duo create ambient electronic music with song titles such as *Spreadsheet Dreams*.

Yesterday, RAOEM surprised office workers at 345 George St, in the city.

However, the impromptu gig was abruptly halted when a security guard punted the musical duo for not seeking permission from the office manager.

Wilson was philosophical. "We're kicked out of one building in three," he said. RAOEM also perform at the Excelsior Hotel, Surry Hills on Sunday.

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New train times

NEW timetables across the CityRail network take effect on Sunday and Transport Minister David Campbell said yesterday the changeover should be trouble-free.

A major education and advertising campaign had alerted commuters to the changes Mr Campbell said but CityRail would carefully monitor the first few weeks.

The timetable would give 100 extra weekday services and better bus connections, he said.



Changes: Mr Campbell

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