



Association of German
Teachers of Victoria Inc.

Supporting teaching and learning since 1979

25th October, 2012

The Hon. Mr. Peter Garrett AM, MP
Minister for School Education, Minister for Early Childhood and Youth
Peter.Garrett.mp@aph.gov.au

Re.: Withdrawal of DEEWR Funding for the Goethe-Institut

Dear Minister,

We met in December 2010 when I accompanied the then Ambassador for the Federal Republic of Germany and Deputy Director of the Goethe-Institut Australia to a meeting in your office. We discussed the Government's commitment to the teaching and learning of German in Australia with the introduction of the Australian Curriculum. At that time, you assured us that the relationship between Australia and Germany was strong and unchallenged by the federal focus on Asia.

Our association has recently heard of the withdrawal of DEEWR funding to support travel subsidies for teachers and students of German to take up Goethe-Institut scholarships in Germany.

Goethe-Institut Australia looks for local partners for projects to demonstrate interest in the German language and culture to their regional office in Jakarta and central office in Munich. The travel subsidies demonstrated federal government support and appreciation of not only the scholarship program, but for all investment from the Goethe-Institut in Australia.

It is hard to reconcile why the significant contribution of the Goethe-Institut scholarships to education in Australia is not valued with what is a modest contribution from the Australian government to directly support the teaching of German in comparison to support shown for other languages.

Australian students benefit from learning German from highly trained teachers. In the past year, 21 teachers and 6 students traveled to Germany on Goethe-Institut scholarships. (See report attached). Goethe-Institut Scholarships can be up to 8 weeks, are intensive in nature and are also offered to trainee teachers of German, unlike federal Endeavour Fellowships which are not offered to trainee teachers of German, but are to other languages. <http://www.goethe.de/ins/au/lp/lhr/sti/enindex.htm>

The DEEWR's decision to withdraw funding is highly regrettable, given that Germany remains a major part of the world economy, in particular in terms of bilateral agreements and investment in our Asia-Pacific region, including local support for the Arts and importantly for education.

The German government invests some AU \$8 million in education in Australia, including exchanges and study scholarships through the Goethe-Institut and *Deutscher Akademischer Ausstauschdienst* (DAAD). In 2012, there are more than 1500 members of the Australian DAAD Alumni. Students can study at a German university in Germany for little or no fees, and the scholarships provide funding towards travel and living costs. <http://www.daad.de/en/>

The Alexander von Humboldt Foundation continues to fund generous scholarships to academics across disciplines, with some 600 von Humboldt fellows at Australian universities. There have been 530 Research Fellowships and Awards to Australian scientists and scholars. <http://www.humboldt-australia.org.au/>

Learning German provides access by Australian students to current ideas, innovation and research in Europe and German-speaking enterprises world wide. Every Australian university has links with German-speaking countries. In 1992, RMIT University developed an International Industry Experience and Research Program (RIIERP) across disciplines. At last count, 103 of the 134 partner institutions and companies were in Germany, Austria, Switzerland or Liechtenstein. Around 100 students go to Germany each year through the RIIERP program. <http://www.rmit.edu.au/riierp>



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Trans-national companies from German-speaking Europe offer local and global employment. More than 300 subsidiaries of German companies with 650+ outlets operate in Australia. They contribute directly or indirectly to securing 100,000 jobs. Since 1967, German and Australian companies and associations have sponsored 10-week scholarships for senior students of German through the Scholarships for Australian-German Student Exchange (SAGSE). More than 1000 students can be named in the SAGSE Alumni. <http://www.sagse.org.au/>

In 2013, our association will also celebrate 25 years of the 10-week reciprocal student exchange program through the AGTV and Bayerischer Jugendring (BJR), with another 1200+ students from Victoria participating since 1988. This program was initiated by the Goethe-Institut in Melbourne.

Other scholarships are offered in other fields, including a joint fellowship with the Australian German Association, which includes a 3-month intensive language course in Germany. <http://www.aga.org.au/>

The German government has also developed a world wide program to introduce and support German in schools known as PASCH. <http://www.pasch-net.de/> The second inter-government German-Chinese regional consultation declared 2013/2014, to be the Year of the German Language in China and will extend the 35 PASCH schools and other programs running through the Goethe-Institut.

At our recent National Conference for teachers of German in Melbourne, our guest speaker from India explained how German is being introduced in 1000 schools in India and spoke of the enormous demand for German at Goethe-Institutes throughout India. <http://www.goethe.de/india>

German language courses at Goethe-Institut are in high demand across Asia. The Goethe-Institut and partners invest in Arts programs across the Asia-Pacific region, and prompt intercultural conversations around sustainability, science and technology. German is very much part of the Asian century.

The AGTV is investigating links and joint-projects for teachers and learners of German in Asia through the Goethe-Institut to align learning programs with the Australian Curriculum. Together we have already facilitated an invitation for principals to attend a regional conference in Bangkok.

Goethe-Institut scholarships promote networking across the world, as there are 149 Goethe-Institutes & 10 liaison offices in 92 countries on every continent. The Goethe-Institut is celebrating 40 years of being in Australia in 2012. Projects are shared globally, quality materials for learning German are shared online, and scholarship programs bring people together from all over the world. The potential for global projects is infinite in this world wide network. <http://www.goethe.de/lrn/wwt/en3052837.htm>

Decisions to withdraw funding or support from German programs reverberate throughout the community, in particular, the German-speaking community in Australia and beyond. They impact on future commitments to support programs and opportunities in our part of the Asia-Pacific region. They are perceived as particularly ungrateful in terms of the long established support for learners of German, including significant support provided pro bono by teachers in associations like ours. We fear that such decisions will also be viewed by principals as a withdrawal of support for the teaching of German in schools, especially with federal funding directed specifically at Asian languages.

When will the Australian government restore funding for the Goethe-Institut scholarship programs to support teachers and attract ongoing investment of resources from the Goethe-Institut in Australia?

Yours faithfully,

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President
AGTV

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Federal Member for Maribyrnong
Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations
Minister for Financial Services and Superannuation
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Further Links

Association of German Teachers of Victoria Inc.
<http://www.agtv.vic.edu.au/>

40 Year Anniversary of the Goethe-Institut in Australia in 2012
<http://www.goethe.de/australia>

50 Year Anniversary of the Goethe-Institut in Indonesia in 2012
<http://www.goethe.de/indonesien>

Goethe-Institut
<http://www.goethe.de/>

Goethe-Institut World Wide Network from Afghanistan to Zimbabwe
<http://www.goethe.de/lrn/wwt/en3052837.htm>

Goethe-Institut International Project initiated in Australia
Bridging the World
<http://www.goethe.de/ins/au/lp/prj/bri/tes/enindex.htm>

DAAD in Australia
<http://ic.daad.de/sydney/>

RMIT University: RIIERP Partner Companies and Institutions
<http://www.rmit.edu.au/browse/Study%20at%20RMIT%2FApplying%20to%20RMIT%2FGlobal%20passport%2FRIIERP%2FAbout%2FPartner%20companies%20and%20institutions/>

RIIERP: Student Feedback
<http://www.rmit.edu.au/browse/Study%20at%20RMIT%2FApplying%20to%20RMIT%2FGlobal%20passport%2FRIIERP%2FStudent%20feedback/>