Word’s out and about

By LIA SPENCER

FOREIGN language assistants will help students in Naree Warren and Naree Warren North learn a second language this year.

There are 22 language assistants from China, 10 from France, seven from Germany, three from Japan, two from Spain and two from Indonesia who started at schools in Victoria this term.

Thomas Mitchell Primary School will also host a Chinese language assistant, while Isabella Jannuzzi from Germany will be at Glenelg Secondary College three days a week and at Fountain Gate Secondary College one day a week.

The language assistants will provide hands-on support with pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary to students and language teachers, and bring with them a range of skills in ICT, dance, drama, music and sport to their school communities.

Tammy van Rossum, Head of Languages and exchange co-ordinator at Glenelg Secondary College, said having a language assistant was beneficial to both students and teachers at the school.

“We have successfully had the opportunity to host three German language assistants over the past few years,” Ms van Rossum said.

“We are developing a comprehensive German language program as a core subject at our school, as well as offering senior classes at VCE. The language assistant has been proven to improve the outcomes of our students,” Ms van Rossum said.

“Many of our students, as they interact with a native German, become more immersed in the language and culture, creating personal connections with the language they are learning, thus continuing with the language beyond the compulsory years (after Year 9).

“They have also been of great benefit for our teachers, providing them with professional development and the opportunity to work with a native speaker.”

Education Minister Martin Dixon said the year-long languages assistants program was a key part of the Victorian Government’s plan to ensure that every Victorian government school student from Prep to Year 10 is learning a language by 2025, starting with Prep in 2015. South-Eastern Metropolitan Region MP Gordon Rich-Phillips said language assistants for local school were an important part the Coalition Government’s long term strategy to improve foreign language acquisition outcomes, the Victorian students.

Language assistants are mostly recent university graduates in their home countries.

The Chinese assistants receive a stipend from the Chinese Government and the remaining assistants’ salaries are paid by the Victorian Government.