

# Knowledge of Asia encouraged

**JONATHON HOWARD**

**BENDIGO** South East Secondary College students were taught the values of Asian cultures and learning Asian languages during a WorkSafe Victoria visit yesterday.

WorkSafe marketing consultant Robert Pica presented two groups of year 7 and 8 students with the Asian Literacy Ambassador project.

The objective of the project is to establish partnerships

between skilled professionals from the business sector, such as Mr Pica, with secondary schools across Australia.

Mr Pica said school ambassadors were trained to assist students and school communities to better understand the diverse career and life opportunities available to those who were knowledgeable about Asian nations. The project also seeks to encourage students to enrol in Asian language subjects to equip them with

cultural skills to effectively engage with Asian people and cultures.

"My aim, as the school's Asian literacy ambassador, is to increase student's understanding as to why studying an Asian language is important and relevant in Australia today, specifically Indonesian and Chinese," Mr Pica said.

BSEC Indonesian and Chinese teachers Beverley Harvey and Vicky Zhou provided support to Mr Pica during his visit, and said it

was crucial for students to embrace Asian cultures.

"With continued growth in Chinese and Indonesian international markets, as well as being our nearest international neighbours, there are very real career opportunities for our students in the future," Ms Harvey said.

Ms Zhou said learning a new language such as Mandarin, which is the primary language in China, could appear daunting, but it was considered easier than learning English.



**PROJECT:** Asian language ambassador Robert Pica speaking to students at BSEC. **Picture:** BRENDAN MCCARTHY