



## **AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY PHNOM PENH**

### **MEDIA RELEASE**

4 August 2022

#### **30 YEARS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TRAINING AT THE AUSTRALIAN CENTRE FOR EDUCATION**

Today, Senator the Hon Penny Wong, Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs, joined by His Excellency Dr Hang Chuon Naron, Cambodia's Minister of Education, Youth and Sport, and Mr Mao Sreng, the Australian Centre for Education Country Director, formally opened the Chak Angre campus of the Australian Centre for Education (ACE) in Phnom Penh.

The event coincides with the 30th anniversary of the first ACE campus opening in Cambodia by former Australian Prime Minister Paul Keating in 1992.

ACE was established in response to the language training needs of the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC). Since then, it has grown to six campuses that currently provide English language training to over 80,000 students each year—from seven year old to adults.

"The 500,000 Cambodians who have studied at ACE have used their English language skills to undertake postgraduate study in Australia, gain better jobs, open new businesses, and bridge their local communities to the wider world," Minister Wong said.

"ACE is a proud part of Australia's education legacy in Cambodia—a legacy which also includes our assistance to set up and maintain the English Language Department at the Royal University of Phnom Penh in the 1980s and 1990s.

"These educational and language links are just one aspect of our shared history. This year marks 70 years of diplomatic relations between Australia and Cambodia. Both our countries' futures are tied to the region we share.

Over seven decades, Australia has partnered with Cambodia in agriculture, rural development, infrastructure, health, governance, gender equality, disability inclusion and of course education.

"There is great potential for Australia and Cambodia to build a stronger relationship, underscored by the shared ambition for a stable and prosperous region," said Minister Wong.

Foreign Minister Wong, is currently visiting Cambodia to participate in the ASEAN Foreign Ministers and related meetings. She will meet Prime Minister Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen, and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Prak Sokhonn during her time here.

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