Australian High Commission
Malaysia

# MEDIA RELEASE

# PERLIS AND SOUTH AUSTRALIAN SCHOOLS PARTNER THROUGH ASEAN-AUSTRALIA BRIDGE PROGRAM

Kuala Lumpur, 4 November 2026 – The Australian High Commission welcomes the selection of Sekolah Kebangsaan Raja Perempuan Budriah in Perlis for the 2026-27 ASEAN-Australia *Building Relationships through Intercultural Dialogue and Growing Engagement* (BRIDGE) School Partnership Program, delivered by the ASEAN-Australia Centre in partnership with Asialink as the implementing partner.

The ASEAN-Australia Centre announced today that the Malaysian school will be paired with South Australia's Port Lincoln Primary School. This new partnership builds on the strong history of collaboration between Australia and Malaysia through the BRIDGE program, which has supported 30 Malaysian schools since 2015.

The BRIDGE program supports partnerships between Australian and Southeast Asian schools, creating opportunities for students and educators to deepen cross-cultural understanding, collaborate on shared projects and forge lasting international connections. Participating schools undertake a comprehensive program of professional learning, student engagement and collaboration including virtual exchanges and reciprocal visits between educators.

Australian High Commissioner to Malaysia, Her Excellency Ms Danielle Heinecke, said these partnerships lay the foundation for lasting education ties between Malaysia and Australia for generations to come.

Ms Heinecke said, "A new chapter of international learning, cultural exchange and friendship awaits students and teachers at Sekolah Kebangsaan Raja Perempuan Budriah. I have seen firsthand the valuable learning opportunities the program creates for both students and teachers.

“During my visit to SMK Pulau Ketam in September, which was paired with South Australia’s Adelaide High School in the 2025-26 BRIDGE program, I heard about how meaningful it was for students to form friendships with their Australian peers and gain new perspectives through cultural exchange. Teachers who undertake exchanges with their Australian and Malaysian counterparts also return with new knowledge, skills and perspectives that benefit their entire school communities.”

Head of the ASEAN-Australia Centre, Ms Fiona Hoggart, said investing in the BRIDGE Program was an investment in our region’s shared future.

"Australia's future is intrinsically linked to Southeast Asia, with people-to-people connections at its heart. BRIDGE invests in our young people, our future leaders. It builds capability and the connections students make will empower them to work together to find solutions to our shared challenges," she said.

Since its inception in 2008, the BRIDGE program has provided opportunities for educators and students across the Indo-Pacific to build cross-cultural understanding, with more than 1,200 schools participating in the program.

In its most recent partnership, SMK Pulau Ketam in Selangor collaborated with South Australia’s Adelaide High School on a range of initiatives, including First Nations storytelling and a digital pen-pal project using Australian online design and publishing tool Canva, enabling students to explore culture, identity and creativity while building friendships and strengthening intercultural understanding across borders.

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Media imagery can be downloaded here: Link
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