

Pupils set to perform in VCE exams

By **MIKI PERKINS**
EDUCATION REPORTER

FOR breakfast today Josh Perez will eat a bowl of cereal bars — at least nine — to fuel his mind and body for the test ahead.

The VCE exam season begins today, and the 18-year-old Mill Park Secondary College student will do two hip-hop-flavoured dance pieces in his performance exam of technical ability, flexibility and physical prowess.

Is he nervous? "Oh yes, but I've done a loads of practice."

This month 6040 students will do VCE performance exams and 10,850 students will undertake an oral language exam before the written exams start with English on October 30.

When Josh took up dancing in year seven, he was the only boy in the class. He's still the only male in his year 12 group.

But perceptions of male dancers are changing due to TV shows such as *So You Think You Can Dance* and the film *Mao's*



Iris and Janneke Ferweda study VCE Dutch.

PICTURE: WAYNE TAYLOR

Last Dancer, he says. Not all VCE subjects are gaining popularity, however.

In the Melbourne suburb of Blackburn, Kingswood College year 12 student Iris Ferweda, 18, and her sister Janneke, 17, who is in year 11, have been studying

for the Dutch VCE exam due to be held later this month.

Dutch was their first language — the one their mother Maria spoke to them from birth, they said — but they forgot much of it when they started school and didn't study it for-

mally until they were in year 10.

Languages such as Albanian, Dutch, Hungarian, Swedish and Maltese are under threat of being cut from the VCE curriculum because the numbers studying them are so small.

To maintain VCE accreditation, the number of students must not drop below 15 for three years in a row.

Five languages — Bengali, Czech, Latvian, Lithuanian and Slovenian — lost accreditation in 2006.

The pair, who studied Dutch on Saturdays at the Victorian School of Languages, said they hoped it would remain a VCE subject.

"Even though it's really small it's just as important to us to learn it as it is for people who do the much larger languages," Janneke said.

Today 108 students will sit an exam on Chinese First Language, 54 students on Croatian, 18 students on Khmer and a further 18 in Persian.

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