

English Australia MEDIA RELEASE



18 September 2012

ENGLISH AUSTRALIA CONFERENCE 2012 – HIGHLIGHTING THE PROFESSIONALISM OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING TO INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

With international student enrolments for English language programs entering their third year of decline, peak body English Australia is providing an important opportunity for those involved in the ELICOS sector of international education to come together to focus on identifying and sharing good practice in teaching English to international students in Australia.

The 25th annual English Australia Conference will be held in Sydney from 19 – 21 September 2012 and is designed to provide a wide range of professional development and networking opportunities for more than 350 people working in or associated with the English Language Intensive Courses to Overseas Students (ELICOS) sector of international education: teachers, managers, marketing staff, student services staff, registration staff, teacher trainers, administrators, accommodation providers, government stakeholders, promotional bodies and suppliers.

The English Australia Conference 2012 has a theme of 'Re-shaping our Future'. This theme acknowledges the challenges of recent years and the need for the industry to be proactive in engaging with developments, both in Australia and overseas, and positioning itself to take advantage of opportunities for growth.

To 'Re-shape our future' the Conference program will address a range of topics that will take those working in ELICOS forward. For teachers and academic managers these include e-learning and technology in the classroom; assessment; academic management and leadership; and student support. Business managers will use information about global industry trends; strategic planning; government initiatives and changes in the regulatory environment to ensure effective operations and marketers will find out the latest on online marketing; developing a brand; destination marketing; and using research to inform their marketing plans. Plenary speakers from the UK, Europe and Australia including global English researcher David Graddol; academic and ELT author Catherine Walter; Nicky Hockly, an internationally recognised author and trainer in learning technologies; and social researcher Mark McCrindle will also help delegates re-shape their future.

Following David Graddol's presentation on developments in China's Pearl River Delta a panel will explore a number of perspectives on China, the most important source country for international students in Australia. Outcomes of the 2012 Action Research in ELICOS Program, an English Australia initiative focusing on classroom based research that has gone from strength to strength since its inception in 2010, will be presented in a colloquium.

Executive Director, Sue Blundell, said that she was expecting delegates to respond positively to a strong program that focused on supporting them in meeting current challenges. "The industry has been through some tough times recently and it is important that we come together to focus on positioning ourselves as a professional industry that delivers excellent English language outcomes to our students from all over the world" she commented.

English Australia

English Australia is the national peak body for the English language sector of international education, and represents over 100 member colleges throughout Australia that provide quality English language programs to students and professionals from around the world. Over 80% of international students learning English in Australia choose to study with an English Australia member college.

Learning English in Australia

There are several reasons why students travel to English speaking countries to learn English. For those students who have an 'end goal' such as to undertake formal study, improving their English may be an important factor in getting them into their chosen course at a school, training provider or university. An increasing number of students also see learning English as key to a successful career, for example in international business; others come to prepare for travel or just to gain the experience of living in a foreign country.

A strong regulatory framework, attractive lifestyle, quality schools and the ability to flexibly combine study, travel and work on the various visa options available to them (tourist, working holiday, student) are primary reasons for Australia's appeal to people overseas considering learning English. Australia is the only country delivering English language training that has national standards specific to English language training that are required for all providers. The sector's quality assurance framework operates within the national Education Services for Overseas Students legislative framework that is the responsibility of DIISRTE. This protects Australia's reputation for delivering quality education services and the interests of overseas students, by setting minimum standards and providing tuition and financial assurance.

English language teaching as an export earner

Following five consecutive years of growth, peaking at 162,114 students in 2008, the English language sector in Australia has now seen three years of declining numbers. Despite this, it remains the largest of all education sectors in terms of the numbers of new international students commencing courses each year. In 2011, 134,440 international students undertook English language courses in Australia. 54% of these held student visas, 24% visitor visas and 22% working holiday and other visas.

It is estimated that approximately 41% of all English language students will pathway through to other education sectors, whilst the other 59% undertake an English language course for a variety of other reasons including tourism and career enhancement. English language students came from over 140 different countries in 2011. 65% of English language students came from Asia, with 16% from Europe, 12% from the Americas and 6% from the Middle East. New South Wales was the destination for the largest numbers of English language students in 2011, followed by Queensland and then Victoria. Queensland and Western Australia have particularly large numbers of English language students using Visitor, Working Holiday and Other visas.

The total economic impact of the tuition fees and additional spending of international English language students in 2011 was Aus\$1.462 billion. This represents an average spend per student of Aus\$10,873.

For further information:

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