

English Australia

MEDIA RELEASE



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GOOD NEWS FOR INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION: BUT GROWTH UNEVEN

English Australia's latest figures on growth in English language training enrolments for overseas students have been welcomed as the best news for five years for international education in Australia.

English Australia is the national peak body for the English language sector of international education, and represents over 120 member colleges throughout Australia that provide quality English language programs to students and professionals from around the world. Over 80% of the more than 147,800 international students learning English in Australia in 2013 chose to study with an English Australia member college.

Announcing the results of the 2013 ELICOS survey (supported by the commonwealth Department of Education and the only data source to include enrolments on all visa types), Executive Director Sue Blundell said, 'The dramatic turnaround in English language enrolments is welcome news after a 23% decline in student numbers over the last four years.

Highlights of 2013 were:

- 19% increase in students;
- 25% increase in weeks of study delivered;
- 26% increase in export earnings to over \$1.8 billion.

Ms Blundell said, 'English language enrolments are the vital first indicator of the health of international education as a whole.

'Pleasing as this growth is, it would be more sustainable if spread more evenly across all types of programs/providers within the sector; stand-alone ELICOS as well as those providing pathways to higher education.'

There is growth across all major visa types and across all major source countries, however robust business models for ELICOS providers have traditionally been based on access to all types of ELICOS students.

While 62% of students are on student visas, this cohort accounts for a massive 80% of the course weeks delivered. If providers are unable to access these student visa holders as a result of restrictive policy settings, then, despite the seeming growth, many providers continue to face challenging times.

Ms Blundell said the current discriminatory policy settings that were restricted to higher education providers and their partners should be addressed as soon as possible in the interests of including high quality, low risk providers and maximising the potential of Australian international education.

For further information:

Sue Blundell | Executive Director

02 9264 4700 | 0402 232 503

[Click here](#) to view an opinion piece related to the release of the survey: *The English language sector - back to growth but how can we make it sustainable?*

[Click here](#) to view an updated Fact Sheet: *ELICOS Industry Statistics 2013*

The English Australia Survey of Major Regional Markets for ELICOS Institutions 2013

The English Australia Survey of Major Regional Markets for ELICOS Institutions 2013 is supported by the Australian Government through the Australian Education International (AEI), as part of its policy to provide data and research on international education. AEI manages Australian Government international education policy and is the international education, science and research arm of the Department of Education. For further information, please visit the website <www.education.gov.au> or <www.aei.gov.au>.

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 the Department of Education. 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.

The English language sector – the global context

Approximately 1,500,000 people travelled to an English speaking country to learn English in 2012 – globally the industry is worth over US\$11.5 billion. The top two destinations for international students wishing to learn English are the UK and the USA, followed by Canada. Australia has grown its market share as a destination for international students wanting to improve their English language skills to consolidate its position as the fourth most popular destination.