

English Australia MEDIA RELEASE



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ENGLISH AUSTRALIA CONFERENCE 2014 – SHOWCASING THE PROFESSIONALISM OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING TO INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN AUSTRALIA

This week English Australia hosts its annual national conference for the English language sector of international education, demonstrating why the industry in Australia is a global leader in the approach it takes to driving professional sharing and growth.

The 27th annual English Australia Conference will be held in Melbourne from 17 – 19 September 2014 and is designed to provide a wide range of professional development and networking opportunities for over 350 delegates who work in or are associated with the English language sector.

The 2014 conference has a theme of ‘Quality: walking the talk’ and will explore the concept and practice of ‘quality’, from management to marketing, from curriculum to classroom practice, from student support to student success. Over three days the conference will seek to answer a number of quality-related questions:

- What are the key drivers of ‘quality’? How can these be implemented in every ELICOS college, regardless of size, student goal or location?
- How can colleges be creative and innovative yet still make sure they meet ‘quality’ standards?
- How can we articulate and demonstrate ‘quality’ to key stakeholders in ELICOS, eg students, agents and government?

English Australia’s Executive Director, Sue Blundell, states, “‘Quality’ is used by many in international education and in the English language teaching industry as almost a throw-away descriptor. We talk about quality colleges, quality courses and quality services to our stakeholders at home and abroad. Yet what is quality? How do we and others know that we are offering it? Can it be quantified and thus measured? How can we be sure we are ‘walking the quality talk’? This is the theme that we are aiming to explore this year through the forum of the conference.”

Ms Sarah Henderson MP Member for Corangamite, and representing the Australian Minister for Education the Hon Christopher Pyne MP, will officially open the conference on Thursday morning.

English Australia has invited a number of speakers from within and outside the ELICOS industry to inform and inspire delegates and to encourage them to ‘walk the quality talk’.

Plenary and featured speakers from the UK, Europe, and Australia will include; Tess Julian on developing an innovation culture, David Graddol on global issues in English language teaching, Adrian Underhill on quality in professional development, Mark Pegrum on mobile technologies and digital literacies, Gad Lim on assessment, Rob Lawrence on Generation G, Phiona Stanley on how (and why) to teach culture as part of language teaching, and Simon Fidler on pricing strategies.

A key highlight of the conference will be the Gala Dinner on Thursday evening, when the annual awards for contribution, leadership, innovation, professional practice and action research will be presented, providing an opportunity for the industry to recognise individuals and organisations who make an outstanding contribution to raising the professionalism and reputation of the English language sector of international education in Australia and to celebrate their achievements, their dedication and their inspiration.

English Australia Outgoing Chair, Chris Wallis, said that she was expecting delegates to respond positively to a strong program that will inspire them to return to their own colleges and reinvigorate their approaches across a range of areas. "The sector is going through another period of growth and we need to ensure that we are delivering quality outcomes for all these students who are choosing Australia," she commented.

For further information:

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English 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 147,000 international students learning English in Australia in 2013 chose to study with an English Australia member college.

As an association, English Australia has a focus on:

- *representing member colleges whose core business is English language teaching;*
- *delivering best practice support and expertise to member colleges; and*
- *providing the English language sector with global visionary leadership.*

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.

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 experienced four years of declining numbers. 2013, however, saw a return to strong growth for the sector and colleges remain upbeat about prospects in 2014. ELICOS remains the largest of all education sectors in terms of the numbers of new international students commencing courses each year. In 2013, 147,828 international students undertook English language courses in Australia. 62% of these held student visas, 19% visitor visas and 19% working holiday and other visas.

It is estimated that approximately 39% of all English language students will pathway through to other education sectors, whilst the other 61% 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 2013. 64% of English language students came from Asia, with 17% from Europe, 14% from the Americas and 5% from the Middle East. New South Wales was the destination for the largest numbers of English language students in 2013, 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 2012 was Aus\$1.845 billion. This represents an average spend per student of Aus\$12,484.

The English language sector – the global context

Over 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.