

English Australia MEDIA RELEASE



25 September 2013

ENGLISH AUSTRALIA CONFERENCE 2013 – HIGHLIGHTING THE PROFESSIONALISM OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING TO INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

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 26th annual English Australia Conference will be held in Perth from 25 – 27 September 2013 and is designed to provide a wide range of professional development and networking opportunities for delegates who work in or are associated with the English language sector.

The 2013 conference has a theme of ‘It’s still about the students...’, reflecting the fundamental approach that drives success for English language colleges – putting the student at the forefront of everything they do.

English Australia’s Executive Director, Sue Blundell, states, “Demographic shifts are changing the profile of our students and research is giving us greater insights into what our students are looking for from their language learning experience. Our students are coming to Australia to study English for a wider than ever range of purposes and on different conditions for their study. We need to meet their needs and continue to strengthen our already well-deserved reputation for high quality courses, teaching and support services. 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.”

The conference delegates will be welcomed to Perth by the WA Minister for Education, the Hon Peter Collier, at a reception on Wednesday evening and the Lord Mayor of Perth, Lisa Scaffidi, will officially open the conference on Thursday morning.

The conference program will bring together a range of speakers who will identify new developments and share their expertise and examples of good practice across a range of topic areas impacting on students.

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 regulatory risk frameworks; features of quality English language provision; and best practice leadership practices to ensure effective operations and marketers will find out the latest trends, dynamics and opportunities as well as sharing the perspectives of key recruitment channels. Student

services staff will explore best practice complaints handling and ideas for helping international students engage with their local community.

Plenary and featured speakers from the UK, Europe, the Middle East, New Zealand and Australia will include English language teaching 'guru' Scott Thornbury on the mind, the body and language, Anne Burns on teaching speaking, Jim Elliot on student mental health, Andrew Lee on cultivating curiosity, Mike McCarthy on changing levels of formality in language, Hanan Khalifa on the impact of assessment on learning, Jill Hadfield on motivation, Liam Brown on academic management, and Barb Wood on leadership practices.

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 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 impacting on the student experience – both inside and outside the classroom. "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.

For further information:

Sue Blundell | Executive Director

02 9264 4700 | 0402 232 503

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 the more than 124,000 international students learning English in Australia in 2012 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.*

English Australia. Level 3, 162 Goulburn Street, Surry Hills NSW 2010 | PO Box 1437, Darlinghurst NSW 1300 AUSTRALIA
T: + 61 2 9264 4700 | F: + 61 2 9264 4313 | easec@englishaustralia.com.au | www.englishaustralia.com.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.

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 four 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 2012, 124,603 international students undertook English language courses in Australia. 61% of these held student visas, 20% 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 2012. 63% of English language students came from Asia, with 17% from Europe, 14% from the Americas and 6% from the Middle East. New South Wales was the destination for the largest numbers of English language students in 2012, 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\$1.459 billion. This represents an average spend per student of Aus\$11,709.

The English language sector – the global context

Over 1,500,000 people travelled to an English speaking country to learn English in 2011 – globally the industry is worth over US\$11.6 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.