

English Australia MEDIA RELEASE



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ENGLISH AUSTRALIA PROGRAM WINS INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION AWARD

The English language sector peak body and professional association English Australia is delighted to announce that its *Action Research in ELICOS¹ Program* has won a prestigious Award for Best Practice/Innovation in International Education under the IEAA Excellence Awards Program for 2013.

The *Action Research in ELICOS Program* was developed in consultation with Anne Burns, Professor of TESOL at the University of New South Wales, and senior researchers at Cambridge English Language Assessment. The program is innovative not only because it provides an industry-wide approach to classroom based research, but also because it brings together three key components that are essential for the success of the program:

- English Australia contributes a large national network of English language colleges, a national conference as a forum to share the outcomes and plays a strong leadership role in driving the program;
- Anne Burns, acknowledged internationally as a leader in language teacher action research, brings her expertise and reputation together with rich opportunities to publish and present around the world on program outcomes;
- Cambridge English Language Assessment provides not only the funding for the project but a depth of research background and reputation that has proven essential in building the credibility of the overall project as well as the facility to publish and promote the outcomes.

The *Action Research in ELICOS Program* offers ELICOS teachers around Australia the opportunity to learn the skills needed to systematically investigate their own teaching practices, thereby encouraging and supporting classroom-based research that will lead to higher levels of professional practice, a key strategic goal of English Australia.

The goals of the program are to equip teachers with the skills to enable them to explore and address identified their own teaching challenges in the context of Australian ELICOS; and to share the outcomes of this research with colleagues and peers through publications and presentations. Through this program English Australia provides visionary leadership both in Australia and overseas.

English Australia introduced the *Action Research in ELICOS Program* as a pilot program in 2010 and it is now in its fourth year, with funding secured for the near future. Since implementation of the program 33 teachers from 18 English language colleges in almost every Australian state and territory have participated in this unique opportunity to explore their practice in a supportive and collaborative environment.

English Australia Executive Director, Sue Blundell, said today: 'We are incredibly proud of this program, which has seen dedicated, creative and passionate teachers engage with research to grow professionally. The benefits of the program extend well beyond the teachers involved to influence the industry more broadly in Australia and internationally and to deliver better learning outcomes for students.'

¹ English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students

Anne Burns has enjoyed the opportunity to gain insights into the the quality of teaching in the Australian ELICOS sector. 'It has been a privilege and pleasure to work with English Australia and Cambridge English Language Assessment to initiate and sustain this innovative action research program. Dedicated ELICOS teachers from all over Australia have shown how enthusiastic they are to engage in action research for the development of their own teaching and their students' learning.'

Dr Hanan Khalifa, Head of Research and International Development at Cambridge English Language Assessment, says: 'Australian language teachers are doing a lot of really innovative work, which can make a real contribution to the way English is taught and learned around the world. It has been a great pleasure to work with English Australia on this exciting program, and to be able to publish some of the outstanding work it has produced.'

The English Australia Professional Support & Development Officer, Katherine Brandon, will receive the award on behalf of English Australia and the collaborative partners at the opening event of the Australian International Education Conference (AIEC) in Canberra on 10 October 2013.

For more information about the program visit www.englishaustralia.com.au/action-research-program. A call for Expressions of Interest in the 2014 program will be issued in November.

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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.*

Cambridge English Language Assessment

Cambridge English Language Assessment is a not-for-profit department of the University of Cambridge (UK), which delivers a range of qualifications for learners and teachers of English based on a strong research division.

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