

# English Australia MEDIA RELEASE



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## AUSTRALIA'S ENGLISH LANGUAGE SECTOR RECORDS A NEW PEAK IN NUMBERS OF STUDENTS IN 2014

The release of the latest data on English language training enrolments for overseas students has been welcomed as it shows a continuation of the return to growth experienced in 2013 and reveals a new record for the number of English language students choosing 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. 88% of international students learning English in Australia in 2014 chose to study with an English Australia member college.

The *English Australia Survey of Major Regional Markets for ELICOS Institutions in 2014* (supported by the Australian Government Department of Education and Training) is the only data source to include enrolments on all visa types. In releasing the report Executive Director Sue Blundell said “We are delighted to see the return to growth continuing for what is a critical sector for international education as a whole.”

A total of 163,542 international students commenced English language programs in Australia in 2014, surpassing the previous peak year of 2008 to record a new high in the number of ELICOS students.

Numbers of English language students in Australia doubled in the five years between 2003 and 2008, then declined by -23% over the four year period 2009-2012. 2013 saw a strong return to growth with +19% and 2014 building on this with further growth of +11%.

Highlights of 2014 were:

- 11% increase in students;
- 10% increase in weeks of study delivered;
- 12% increase in export earnings to over \$2 billion.

Growth was experienced across both Student visa holders and Visitor visa holders, however there was a decline in the number of English language students with Working Holiday visas (reflecting the decline in issuance of these visa types). All of the top ten source countries showed growth except for South Korea. All States experienced growth except Queensland, which experienced a small decline of -1%, mainly attributable to a decline in the number of South Koreans studying on Working Holiday visas.

Ms Blundell said, “The other sectors of international education look to English language enrolments as the vital first indicator of the health of international education as a whole. Pleasing as the growth is, however, it would be more sustainable if spread more evenly across all types of programs/providers within the

sector. Current government policy has favoured pathway programs leading to higher education, with growth in these pathway students much stronger than the growth in students for stand-alone English language programs.”

An increasing proportion (66%) of students are on student visas and this cohort accounts for a massive 83% of the course weeks delivered. If ELICOS 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 that the sector was eagerly anticipating the outcomes of the review of streamlined visa processing with a view to establishing a fairer approach to streamlining visas that would be accessible to all high quality, low risk providers across the English language sector.

Ms Blundell added that whilst growth in the number of students was an important success measure for the sector, the future sustainability of this growth depended on Australian English language colleges continuing to deliver learning outcomes that meet student expectations as well as an excellent student experience. “What is pleasing is that our national student satisfaction surveys continue to show that we are delivering on the promise and this underpins the sustainability of the growth that the sector is experiencing” said Ms Blundell.

English Australia will be providing a detailed analysis of the 2014 ELICOS sector data for all stakeholders through a series of *ELICOS Statistics Seminars* and *Networking Functions* held across Australia in May/June, with the first being held in Melbourne on 21 May.

Visit the English Australia website for more information about these seminars:

<http://www.englishaustralia.com.au/events>

For further information:

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[Click here](#) to view an updated Fact Sheet: *ELICOS Industry Statistics 2014*

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### ***The English Australia Survey of Major Regional Markets for ELICOS Institutions in 2014***

*Whilst the Australian Government Department of Education and Training collects and reports on data for student visa holders, this English Australia report is the only source of data relating to English language students from overseas that hold other visas.*

*This is the eighteenth annual survey of the ELICOS sector commissioned by English Australia. The purpose of the study was to gain a clear picture of the number of overseas students and visitors who undertook English language studies in Australia in 2014.*

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Particular attention was taken to obtain statistics on:

- student numbers by nationality;
- student numbers by visa type;
- numbers of individual and group enrolments;
- length of enrolments; and
- enrolments in each state or territory .

The English Australia Survey of Major Regional Markets for ELICOS Institutions in 2014 is supported by the Australian Government Department of Education and Training. For further information, please visit the website <[www.education.gov.au](http://www.education.gov.au)> or <[www.aei.gov.au](http://www.aei.gov.au)>.

### **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. 88% of the more than 163,000 international students learning English in Australia in 2014 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 and Training. 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**

Over 1,557,000 people travelled to an English speaking country to learn English in 2013 – globally the industry is worth over US\$11.7 billion. The top two destinations for international students wishing to learn English are the UK and the USA, followed by Canada and Australia. These top four destinations attract 85% of English language students and deliver 89% of student weeks.

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