



ANNUAL REPORT 2010-2011



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PEOPLE AT NEAS

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



**Emeritus Professor
Millicent Poole**
Chair – Appointed April
2008



Ms Cynthia Kralik
Director – Appointed
November 2006



Ms Bianca Panizza
Director – Appointed
February 2011



Mr Robin Simpson
Director – Appointed
November 2005

COMPANY SECRETARY



Ms Emma Lawler
Appointed April 2011

EXECUTIVE STAFF



Ms Anne Holmes
Executive Director



Ms Diane Price
Assistant Manager



Mr Stefan Boffa
Operations Manager



Ms Suzannah Clerc
Senior Assessment
Officer



Ms Ana Bratkovic
Assessment Officer
Conference Convenor



Mr John Price
Assessment Officer



Ms Jan Collins
Assessment Officer



Ms Elena Estrina
Accounts Officer



Ms Jenny Batten
Administration Officer



Ms Chris Hollister
Admin Support

CHAIR'S FOREWORD



It gives me great pleasure to present the Annual Report of the National ELT Accreditation Scheme Limited (NEAS) for the period 1 July 2010 to 30 June 2011.

This was a year of uncertainty for NEAS accredited providers, faced with the changes in the regulatory environment, the rising Australian dollar and continuing negative media reporting of Australia's international education sector.

Despite the decline in key international markets and the legislative changes at state and federal level, NEAS maintained a sound level of stability in accreditation activity. NEAS tendered for a new contract with DIAC for the monitoring of AMEP service providers and, a new development, for the management of the AMEP Assessment Task Bank. In addition, activity around NEAS International accreditation continued, with applications from centres in Vietnam and the UAE.

It was pleasing to see strong international representation at NEAS' fifteenth ELT Management Conference and to receive strong positive feedback on the success of the presentations, the workshops and the networking events.

In response to developments in Australian ELT, the NEAS Executive made submissions both to the second round review of the ESOS Act and to the review of the student visa program. NEAS was actively involved in the Provider Re-registration process, an outcome of the amendments to the ESOS Act, particularly in NSW where we had a delegated authority to approve providers of non-award ELICOS courses for CRICOS registration.

Throughout the year NEAS has had regular productive discussions with both TEQSA and ASQA. The outcome for NEAS accredited centres is positive, with NEAS accreditation acknowledged by ASQA as appropriate for CRICOS registration purposes, on condition that providers are also successfully assessed against the National Code by ASQA.

Overall, in spite of the challenges facing international education, the outlook for the ELT sector remains positive, and NEAS is in a strong position to play a leading role in the future of the industry.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read 'Millicent Poole'.

Emeritus Professor Millicent Poole
Chair

GOVERNANCE

At its Annual General Meeting in October 2010, Ms Cynthia Kralik stood down as a Director in accordance with Clauses 28.3 and 29.1 of the Constitution. There was unanimous agreement among the members to re-elect Ms Kralik as a Director.

Ms Bianca Panizza was nominated as representative of the Council of the ELICOS Association pursuant to clause 27.2(b) of the Constitution.

NEAS ASSESSMENT PANEL

NEAS acknowledges the professional and excellent work undertaken by the NEAS Assessment Panellists. The trained team of Assessment Panellists is integral to NEAS accreditation and their on-site assessments and associated reports help maintain the quality of the sector overall.

New South Wales	Queensland	Victoria	South Australia
Ms Marion Bagot	Dr Pamela Beaumont	Mr Harvey Broadstock	Dr Jonathan Crichton
Ms Janet Conroy	Dr Gary Birch	Ms Sue Casey	Dr Carol Gibson
Mr Denver Craig	Mrs Margaret Casey	Ms Lesley Crommelin	Western Australia
Mrs Janet Halliday	Ms Del Childs	Ms Jane Hayman	Mr Colin Beasley
Ms Sharon Luhr	Ms Ronda Dove	Ms Elizabeth Kemp	Ms Helen Carroll
Ms Carolyn Matthews	Ms Deborah Kemish	Ms Shirley Martin	Ms Toni Dobinson
Mr Paul Mattingly	Ms Cath Moore	Ms Margot Tucker	Mrs Christabel Lee
Ms Glenys Merrifield	Ms Jill Schiffmann		Mr Paul Mercieca
Ms Pamela Riley	Ms Sue Woods		
Ms Mary Ann Szeps			
Ms Noreen Whittaker			

REPORT OF NEAS ACTIVITY

Executive Director's Report on the period July 2010 to June 2011

I have pleasure in presenting the report of NEAS activity for the period July 2010 to June 2011.

The past year has been a difficult one for NEAS accredited centres nationally with the strong Australian dollar, issues over visa issuance and the lingering effects of negative media reports contributing to a significant drop in international student enrolments. However, the number of NEAS accredited centres remained consistent with the preceding year and there was a steady level of activity in centres' change of scope applications. Interest in international accreditation was also steady and NEAS' networking and profiling activity both nationally and internationally increased substantially. Below is a summary of the key areas of activity for the year.

1. THE ELT INDUSTRY

1.1 The Stakeholder Survey

The Stakeholder Survey, managed by Rob Lawrence, was a major initiative in late 2010 and NEAS was delighted with the level of response, the endorsement of NEAS' current services and the emerging opportunities for additional ones. The conclusions from the survey can be summarised as:

- The marketplace recognises and values accreditation. Quality, compliance and market validation are seen as core to Australian education.

- NEAS is widely regarded as the market leader in the accreditation field. Further, stakeholders clearly want an organisation exclusively dedicated to their sector.
- NEAS needs to be constantly alert to influences on the educational sectors surveyed as well as on subsections of each sector.
- NEAS should adopt a leadership position as an authoritative and well respected voice for the English Language education industry. Many respondents regard lobbying and industry representation as an essential service, for which some respondents are willing to pay.
- Particularly important during turbulent times, is keeping the industry fully informed of the latest market developments and the impact of changing market conditions. Any strategy must feature regular updates, regular information flow and relevant market insights and intelligence.
- NEAS should have an extensive product and service portfolio, which includes such services as market intelligence, networking events, professional development, industry representation and consultancy services. This portfolio should underpin the core strengths and industry requirements associated with accreditation, quality assurance and qualification verification.
- The dissemination of information should occur through a dynamic website, emails and networking events. For those in smaller centres, networking events are invaluable.
- There are gaps in respondents' awareness ranging from NEAS' relationship with English Australia and government through to specifics, such as the appeals policy and procedure.
- NEAS staff are widely regarded as knowledgeable and helpful, experienced in accreditation assessment, responsive and accurate in the provision of information.
- There is scope for improvement, particularly with regard to tailoring services and promoting activities. NEAS is widely recognised for valuing clients and for general communications.

As a result, the recommendations are that NEAS should:

- i. employ a full-time Communications Manager, whose role includes the production of industry updates, website management, e-communications, media releases, market analysis.
- ii. be more vocal through regular media coverage & contribution, lobbying and industry representation.
- iii. invest in a major website upgrade with news, topical features, industry data trends and market intelligence all featuring prominently on the website.
- iv. feature the NEAS trademark more prominently through the supply of year-dated certificates when accreditation is awarded, and a range of additional materials for purchase.
- v. launch a series of state-based networking events, supported by a range of online networking options including forums, discussion boards and webinars.
- vi. hold a series of professional development workshops in Sydney and interstate.
- vii. develop a mailing list in order to engage with future managers and decision-makers, not just existing contacts.
- viii. increase the level and frequency of communications through fortnightly on-line updates of one or two pages and a quarterly hard-copy bulletin, of 8 pages. The updates should be very industry specific and tailored to current events / topical issues, whereas the bulletin should have a consumer interface through articles such as case studies of centres, testimonials, overseas columnists, data trends etc.

NEAS has taken all the recommendations into account, has prioritised them and has begun implementation. The first initiatives under way are the employment of a Communication Officer and the undertaking of a major website upgrade.

1.2 NEAS' submission to the ESOS Review

As a key stakeholder, NEAS submitted a paper in January for round 2 of the ESOS Review: "Reforming ESOS: Consultations to build a stronger, simpler, smarter framework for international education in Australia". Reforms from this review continue to be rolled out. In February, NEAS met Michael Knight to discuss issues around student visa issuance and in April submitted "A Strategic Review of the Student Visa Program".

1.3 Provider Re-registration

The Provider Re-registration process involved a heavy workload for NEAS Assessment Officers, particularly in NSW where NEAS had, until 30 June, delegated authority by VETAB to approve providers of non-award ELICOS courses for CRICOS registration. The re-registration of providers was achieved within the timeframe set and with a spirit of collegiality between NEAS and VETAB.

1.4 National ELICOS Standards and ASQA

Constructive meetings continued all year with ASQA (the National VET Regulator), culminating in a positive outcome for NEAS accredited providers. The good news in June for NEAS providers was that "where NEAS accreditation is currently approved, NEAS accreditation will be accepted as meeting the National ELICOS Standards for purposes of CRICOS registration for ASQA's role as designated authority under the ESOS Act" and ASQA will assess providers against ESOS and the National Code. This guaranteed "business as usual" for NEAS accredited providers, who having met our quality standards and ASQA's check on compliance against ESOS and the National Code would be registered on CRICOS.

For providers in South Australia, Queensland and Tasmania, where regulatory powers had not yet been transferred to the Commonwealth, the current regulatory body would continue to be the delegated authority for registration on CRICOS. The transfer is expected to take place in late 2011.

In June 2011 the Minister for Tertiary Education and Skills, Senator Chris Evans approved the National ELICOS Standards and Foundation Program Standards as legislative instruments. ASQA is the designated authority for ELICOS and Foundation Program courses, except where they are delivered by schools. At 30 June, in response to ASQA's request for audit service submissions, NEAS was in the process of applying to audit National ELICOS Standards and Foundation Program Standards (until TEQSA is operational), as well as checking those providers for compliance against ESOS and the National Code.

NEAS and ASQA have developed a strong working relationship and continue to maintain close contact through a long and complex regulatory process.

1.5 Meetings with TEQSA

Regular meetings were held with Interim CEO TEQSA Ian Hawke, who welcomed consultation with NEAS on the basis of NEAS' strong record in quality assurance. Discussion centred on the accreditation of ELICOS delivery in universities (both self accrediting and non self accrediting) and the possibility of extending NEAS' role, should the submission to ASQA be successful, in auditing Foundation Standards when TEQSA takes them over in 2012.

TEQSA Commissioners are to be in place in July 2011 with NEAS being offered an opportunity to meet them soon after the transition from CEO to Commissioners. TEQSA plans to be operational at the end of January 2012. NEAS is confident of maintaining the positive relationship throughout the transition process.

1.6 Meetings with DIAC

Meetings were held with Director, Diana Trionfi, and Assistant Director, Tracey Hansen, AMEP Section, DIAC, throughout the year. Prior to the conclusion of the extended (to 30 June 2011) DIAC contract, NEAS entered the tender process for a new contract with DIAC for 3 + 3 years duration to quality assure provision of AMEP nationally. An integral part of the tender is a submission to manage, maintain and host the Assessment Task Bank (ATB), previously managed by Macquarie University. At 30 June NEAS expects a positive outcome by end September 2011.

The ATB is a resource available online to providers of AMEP delivering the CSWE syllabus. Current assessment tasks are held securely, access to them is audited, additional tasks are developed regularly and moderation of assessment is organised by the ATB manager.

At 30 June the tender process is nearing completion and NEAS awaits the outcome.

1.7 ELT Management Conference

The 15th Annual ELT Management Conference was held on 12 and 13 May at the Swissôtel Sydney, and attracted 218 participants, including some international providers, and 18 sponsors. Feedback from participants was largely positive, with only two suggestions to relocate the next conference to a larger venue, but a number of comments noting dissatisfaction with the technical support. The latter comments were conveyed to the management of the hotel. There was particular appreciation for the plenary sessions and the sessions targeting management skills.

This year's conference included several more workshops and fewer plenary sessions, to offer participants a greater range of choice and to make transitions between sessions smoother.



1.8 Provider Workshop

A total of 27 participants attended a Compliance and Regulation Workshop in Brisbane on 22 July 2010. The workshop was aimed at Principal Executive Officers, Principal Administrators and those in positions responsible for compliance with standards, and addressed specific areas of compliance within accreditation requirements. NEAS sessions were followed by presentations from industry and government representatives.

1.9 NEAS Assessment Panellist Training

Our assessment panellists are valued for their contribution to the quality of ELT in Australia through the experience, integrity and professionalism they bring to their work.

In the light of the magnitude of changes pending in the new educational environment, NEAS staff conducted professional development sessions for 27 (including 5 newly recruited) assessment panellists on 30 June and 1 July 2011. There was a high level of participation by all attendees and unanimous positive response to the training.

The workshop focused on the assessment of compliance with NEAS Standards during on-site assessments and the changing regulatory environment in which NEAS operates. The program was

wide-ranging and included updates on NEAS, government regulation and the current challenges for international education in Australia. Topics of sessions included an introduction to e-learning, a focus on curriculum and NEAS' assessment of courses, presentations and discussion on how to manage an on-site assessment, a focus on report writing, and an introduction to the National ELICOS Standards. Presentations were by an invited speaker, experienced panellists and the NEAS Executive.

1.10 NEAS International

There was increased activity for NEAS International, with successful applications from centres in Vietnam and another underway in Dubai.

NEAS currently has 14 ELT centres accredited internationally, with 5 more in the process of accreditation. Accredited centres are located in Indonesia, Vietnam and Cambodia, with interest now from the Middle East. Initially centres have tended to be private providers with a link to Australia, but interest is developing from offshore campuses of Australian universities and from national universities in Asian countries.

To be accredited by NEAS internationally, providers must demonstrate that they meet NEAS standards in all respects, through a rigorous accreditation process. Applicants generally need a period of preparation time to meet NEAS standards, particularly in the areas of teaching qualifications and class sizes. NEAS counsels providers throughout this period to ensure they understand the standards they must meet.

In the coming year, NEAS will undertake an International Growth Strategy project, led by a prominent consultant. NEAS' quality reputation is high in Asia and providers there have shown keen interest in acquiring the NEAS quality tick.

The objectives for growth in international accreditation are:

- diversify NEAS activities and increase revenue streams
- position NEAS strategically in the face of competition from global accreditation bodies
- raise the profile of NEAS International and (as a result) NEAS' profile nationally

The key expected outcomes are:

- identified opportunities to increase fee paying NEAS services internationally
- increased NEAS International profile of expertise in ELT accreditation and associated services
- staged plan for implementation of the strategy for 2012 - 2013 market entry

NEAS has been working with Austrade on strategies for international growth and took the opportunity to meet Austrade Education Managers in Hanoi during an on-site accreditation visit to a Vietnamese provider. The meeting was encouraging for NEAS' planned international growth in Vietnam.

NEAS' attendance at conferences such as CAMTESOL has contributed to raising NEAS' profile internationally, as a key sponsor, as a facilitator of a session for Academic Managers of NEAS accredited centres and as a point of contact for centres interested in NEAS' quality assurance. At the February 2011 conference, NEAS sponsored the Leadership Forum, which was attended by, among others, Cambodian government officials. Meetings were held with representatives from an Indonesian university and a Thai private provider, both of whom are working towards meeting NEAS standards and with a provider, already NEAS accredited, planning to accredit an extra centre.

1.11 CAMTESOL

CAMTESOL is the prime ELT conference in Asia and this year attracted in excess of 1,500 participants. It is a valuable conference for NEAS, providing opportunities to meet a wide range of ELT providers from many countries across a key growth area. Following participation in the 2009 and 2010

conferences, NEAS was again invited as a key sponsor to the CAMTESOL conference on English Language Teaching, held in Phnom Penh on 25 to 27 February 2011.

NEAS hosted the pre-conference Leadership Forum, co-facilitated by Christine Bundesen, Director of ICTE, University of Queensland and Donald Freeman, Professor, School of Education, University of Michigan. Discussion at the forum was held with the Director of the Cambodian National Institute of Education and the Training Specialist of the Cambodian Department of Education and Training.

NEAS organised and led a workshop with Academic Managers from NEAS International accredited centres, focusing on academic issues and quality improvement initiatives in their centres.

Contact was made with academics and managers of both private colleges and ELT departments of public universities across south-east Asia and the Middle East interested in quality assurance in education.

1.12 APQN

NEAS has been for some years a member of Asia-Pacific Quality Network (APQN), sharing interest in setting and maintaining quality standards. In August 2010 NEAS responded to a call for Expressions of Interest to participate in a project on Mutual Recognition. Five APQN members across Asia had their submissions accepted. AUQA's submission was accepted on behalf of Australia.

However, in October 2010 NEAS was invited by Dr Antony Stella of AUQA, on the basis of the quality of NEAS' submission, to collaborate with AUQA on providing input to the Mutual Recognition project. The focus was on external quality assurance of universities and university level institutions and AUQA requested that NEAS provide input based on NEAS' quality assurance expertise.

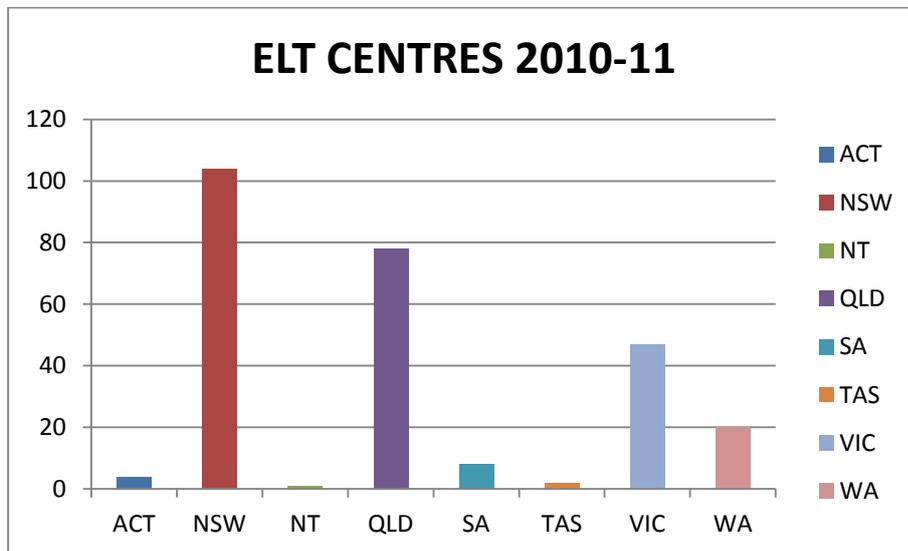
NEAS responded to a questionnaire on:

- the mapping of the relevant policies, practices and outcomes of the QA approaches of the four APQN members selected for the project
- guidelines for the observations of each other's QA exercise
- reporting on the issues that emerge from this phase of the MR project
- planning for the next phase of the project

All responses were collated into a draft report which was published in December 2010.

2. ELT CENTRE ACCREDITATION ACTIVITIES

2.1 ELT Centre Numbers



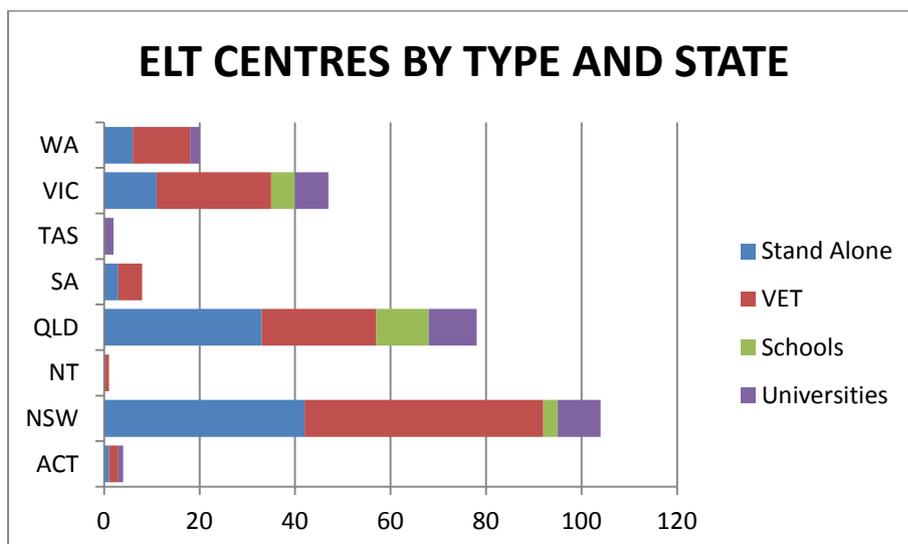
At 30 June 2011 there were 264 accredited and provisionally accredited ELT centres recorded on NEAS' database. This is consistent with the number of centres as at 30 June 2010.

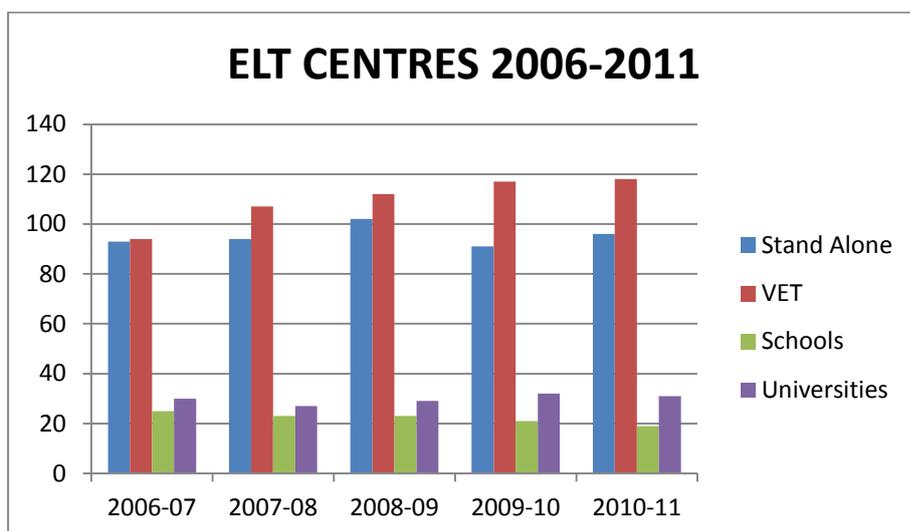
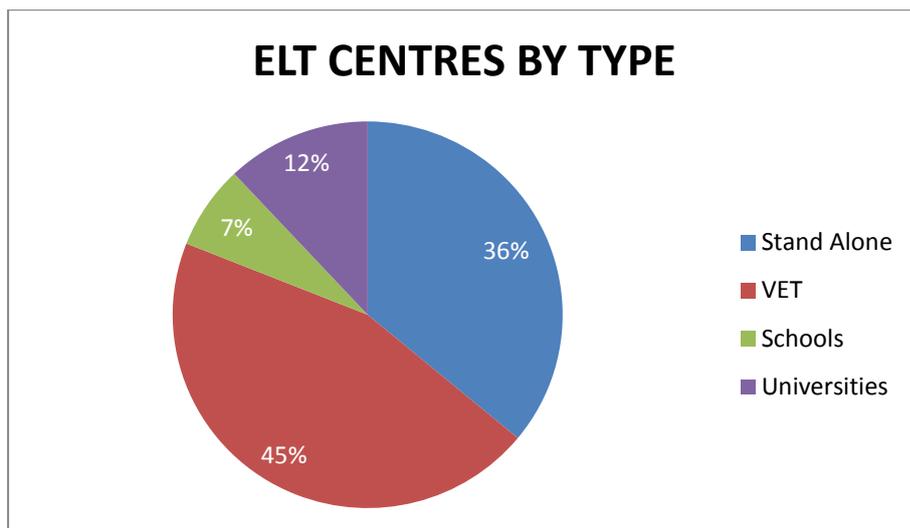
A total of 15 centres ceased operating during the financial year. Of these:

- 1 had a change of legal entity
- 14 voluntarily withdrew from accreditation for financial reasons

2.2 Provider Types

NEAS categorises providers under four main types – stand-alone ELT centres, vocational education and training (VET), secondary schools and universities – reflecting the main sector of operation for the legal entity in each case. The prevalence of cross-sector providers observed in previous years was again manifest in 2010-11, with some organisations offering programs across four sectors.

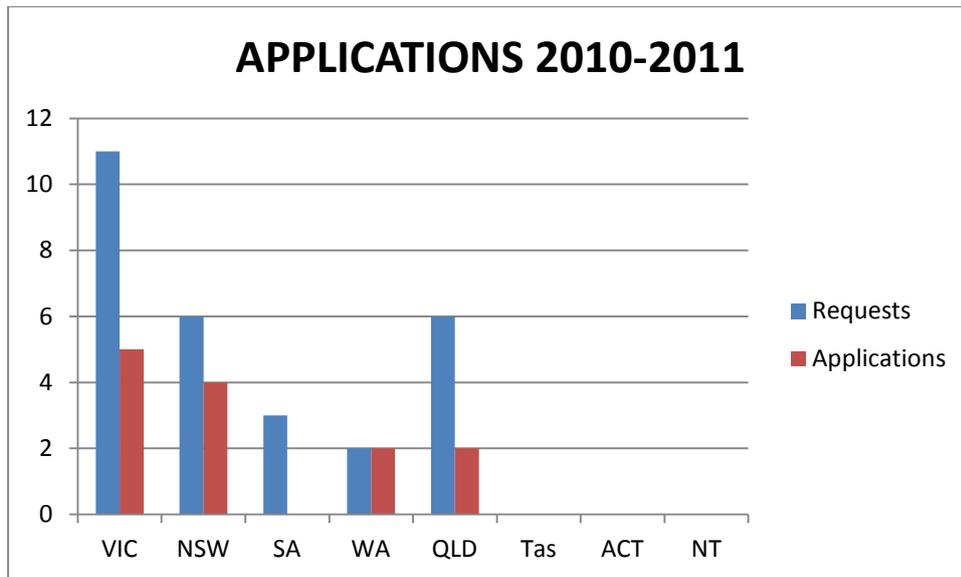




Previous annual reports have noted an increase in the number of VET providers offering non-award English courses; a trend continued particularly in New South Wales, Queensland and Victoria.

Provider type	ACT	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	Total
University	1	9	0	10	0	2	7	2	31
Vocational Education and Training	2	50	1	24	5	0	24	12	118
Secondary School	0	3	0	11	0	0	5	0	19
Stand-alone ELT Centre	1	42	0	33	3	0	11	6	96
Total Centres at 30 June 2011	4	104	1	78	8	2	47	20	264
Total 2009-10	4	103	1	82	9	2	44	19	264
Total 2008-09	2	110	1	79	10	2	42	20	266
Total 2007-08	2	103	1	77	9	2	38	19	251
Total 2006-07	2	101	1	73	10	2	35	19	243

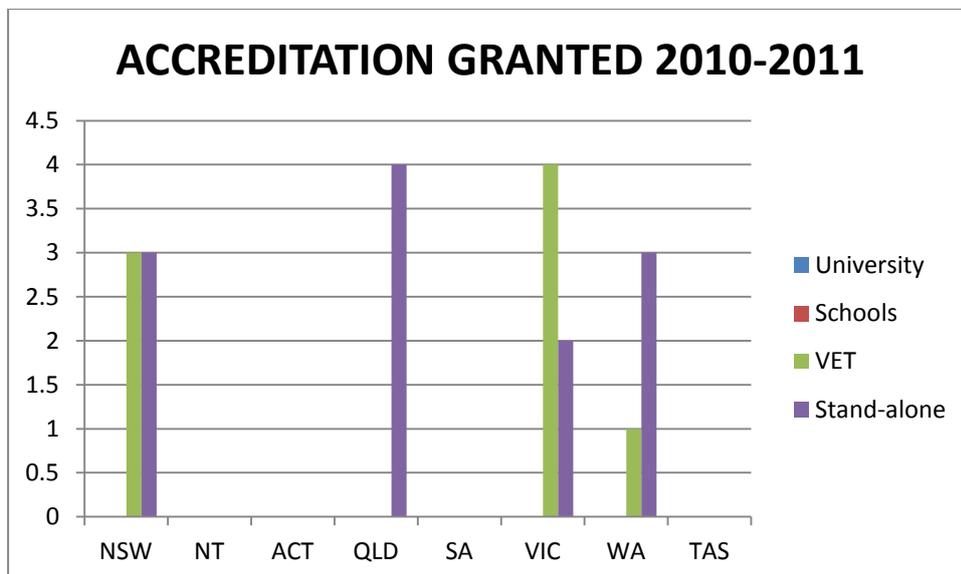
2.3 Requests For Application Packs

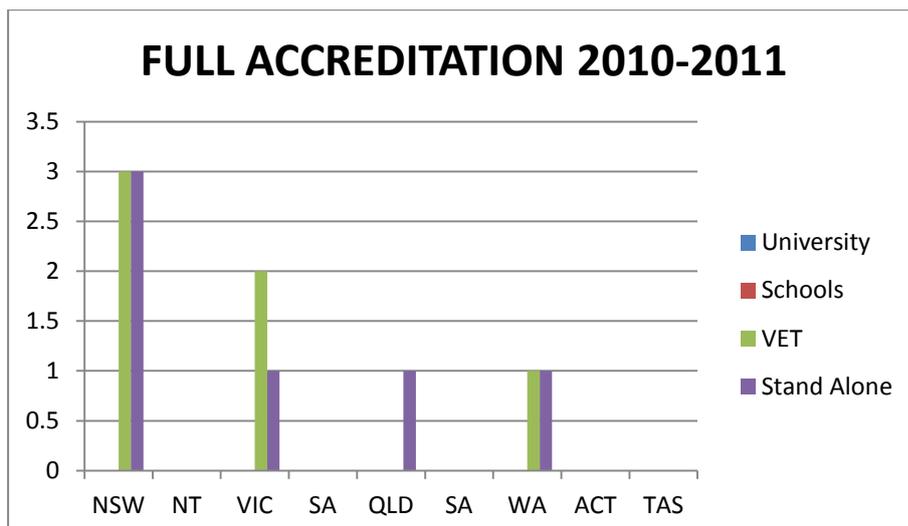


NEAS recorded 28 requests for application packs for ELT centre accreditation within Australia during the 2010-2011 reporting year, down from 50 in 2009-10. A total of 13 applications were received.

2.4 Newly Accredited Centres

A total of 20 ELT centres were newly accredited during the 2010-2011 period. Of the 20 newly accredited centres, 8 were VET providers and 12 were stand-alone ELT centres. A further 12 centres achieved full accreditation during the same period. As in previous years accreditation activity was highest in New South Wales and Victoria.





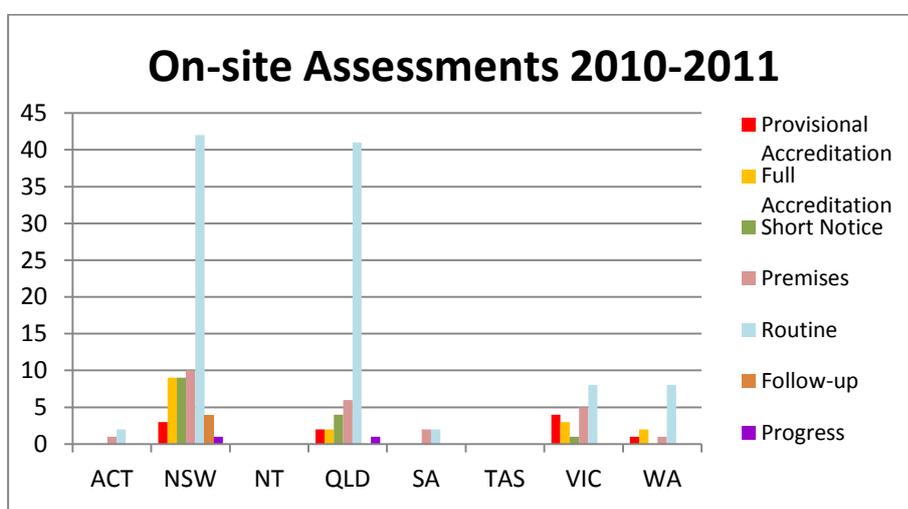
2.5 Desk Audit Assessments

As with past years, submissions of applications for NEAS accreditation were of varying quality, with some ELT centres unable to provide all the documents requested. Annual Returns were in the main comprehensive, although many required clarification of details relating to ELT programs offered, the number of students and shifts, as well as promotional material.

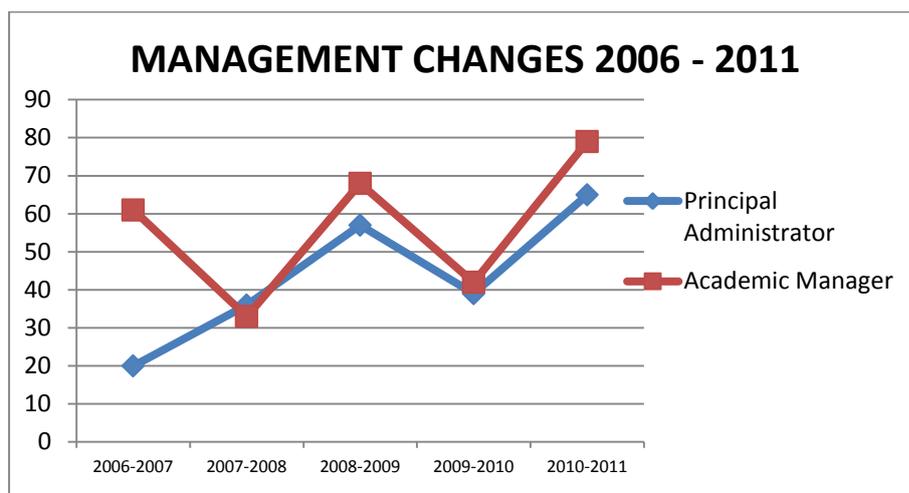
Annual Return information was used to update NEAS' database and inform NEAS Assessment Panellists prior to routine monitoring visits. CRICOS-related information of providers in NSW was relayed by NEAS to the Vocational Education and Training Accreditation Board (VETAB) until 15 June when responsibility for this function was referred to ASQA. Providers operating in other states/territories, made use of updated NEAS *Conditions of Accreditation* and additional relevant documentation to inform respective registering authorities.

2.6 On-site Assessments

During the reporting period 174 on-site assessments were made. As with the desk audit process, providers were given 28 days to submit follow up information. Of the total on-site assessments, there were 13 short notice visits triggered by concerns following desk audit processes, including 6 investigations of complaints that had been formally made to NEAS in relation to non-compliance. In each instance, the ELT centre was given a 28 day timeframe to take action and prove compliance. 25 on-site assessments related specifically to changes in premises or maximum student numbers.



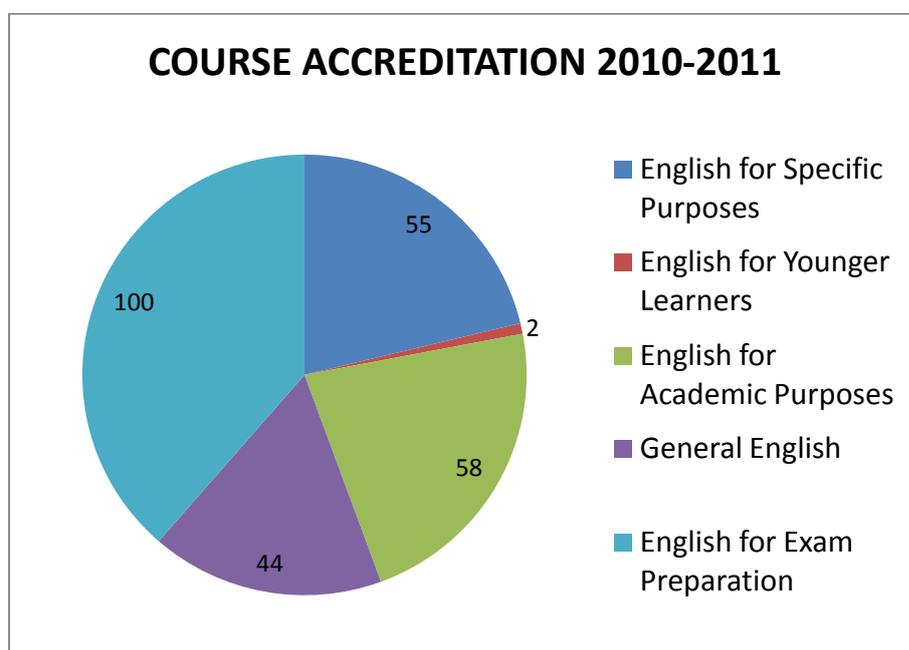
2.7 Changes to Scope of Accreditation



There were 79 changes to Academic Manager and 65 changes to Principal Administrator completed in 2010-11, up on the previous year.

2.8 ELT Programs

There were 259 new courses accredited during the reporting year, but balancing this, 99 courses were removed from NEAS' database, either as a result of centre closure or at the request of the ELT centre. Course accreditation activity focused on English for Exam Preparation and English for Academic Purposes.



3. ADULT MIGRANT ENGLISH PROGRAM (AMEP)

2010-2011 has been a period of transition for the AMEP, as contracts under the current program structure drew to a close and a new AMEP model was introduced.

Service providers have devoted significant resources to preparing for the new tenders and ensuring they are well placed to operate within the new environment. However, it was gratifying to note that AMEP services continued to be delivered at a high standard for the benefit of clients throughout the reporting year.

NEAS' existing contract was extended to 31 December 2010. NEAS then accepted DIAC's invitation to enter into a new agreement to 30 June 2011. As with service providers, NEAS was required to tender for services for the period 1 July 2011 to 30 June 2014 and submitted a tender in June.

4. FINANCE

During the year NEAS, in a communication to the providers, foreshadowed a simpler, clearer and more transparent fee structure, to come into effect on 1 July 2011.

The ELT Management Conference was financially successful thanks to both good attendance by ELT managers and strong support from sponsors. Coupled with the AMEP contract and with international providers coming into the annual return cycle, this ensured that NEAS recorded a surplus for the year.

5. STAFFING

In May 2011 NEAS added a new staff member. Ms Jenny Batten joined as Administration Officer when Ms Belinda Aynsley resigned to join her husband in Ireland. Staffing at NEAS remains stable, with minimal turnover in the past few years. NEAS staff have a broad range of skills as well as the flexibility to meet fresh challenges and new opportunities as they arise in the changing regulatory environment. Recruitment of additional staff is planned, dependent on the outcome of NEAS' submission to ASQA.

6. CONCLUSION

In conclusion my thanks go to the Board of Directors, who are central to the strategic planning process, to maintaining good governance, to overseeing NEAS' business principles and to ensuring a sustainable future for NEAS.

NEAS' staff have risen to the challenges and uncertainties of the year with professionalism, expertise and in a spirit of cooperation. The re-registration process was completed within the allotted timeframe, the changing regulatory environment was incorporated into processes, which themselves have been targeted for an internal review.

The assessment panellists continue to bring their professionalism, experience and integrity to monitoring the *Standards and Criteria for ELT Centres*, maintaining NEAS' reputation for rigour and fairness.

I would like to thank the members for their support of NEAS, their contribution to our planning processes and for their insights into the current state of the industry.

With 21 years' accreditation experience, NEAS is looking forward to the challenges of a new national regulation model, growth in international accreditation and a significant role among accrediting bodies globally.



Anne Holmes
Executive Director



National ELT Accreditation Scheme Ltd

ABN 29 003 980 667