



Annual Report

2015 - 2016

QUALITY ASSURANCE
IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE
TEACHING



NEAS ANNUAL REPORT 2015-2016

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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE

NEAS' has posted some remarkable achievements over the past 12 months, posting growth in all areas of our chosen areas of activity.

NEAS' ongoing contribution to the English language teaching sector in Australia, Cambodia, Vietnam, Indonesia, Singapore and the United Arab Emirates is now firmly aligned to our unique *stakeholder driven feedback QA model*.

NEAS' quality assurance operation has now touched a huge number of stakeholders, with students, teachers, administrative staff and managers all offering their views on the capability and effectiveness of whether ELT centres are delivering on their value proposition.

By the end of FY2016, NEAS has ensured that over 200 ELT centres have been through the NEAS Quality Assurance process, with many centres having also completed their second round of QA assessment.

We can now confidently state that NEAS has finalised its transitioning from an accreditation agency to a fully-functioning and comprehensive quality assurance organisation.

In the completion of this journey, NEAS has undertaken 20,000 student and 3,000 teacher and administrative staff member online surveys. Over 400 focus groups have been held with 2,400 people attending them and almost 1,000,000 individual online survey questions have been answered.

We are now pleased to state that many new centres are making the decision to undertake the NEAS Quality Assurance process, in their goal of achieving NEAS Quality Endorsement. This is achieved by:

- i. Collecting stakeholder data to be compared with that of other like-positioned ELT centres and with the industry as a whole, to establish quality positioning;
- ii. Engaging teachers, students, administrative and marketing team members in the feedback process;
- iii. Undertaking anonymous and live focus group feedback channels which are cross-referenced to validate views expressed.

With 100% of the NEAS membership having been through the NEAS Quality Assurance process by 30 June 2016, Australia's and South-East Asia's quality ELT providers are able to confirm their standing and commitment to being high quality providers of English language teaching.

The good news is that NEAS Quality Endorsement also has a range of benefits that provide regulatory, pedagogical and commercial value which include:

- **NEAS Benchmarking**

The 2016 financial year saw the launch of *NEAS Benchmarking*. This development provides NEAS Quality Endorsed members with an insight into their performance across 90 variables, as compared with that of their colleagues and competitors.

For the first time, members who have a number of centres can compare their performance "internally". Centres may also assess themselves externally, against like-positioned centres (for instance against other VET or HE providers), or as compared with the industry as a whole.

This type of information allows centres to strategically focus their quality investment in areas that require the greatest attention or will provide the greatest return.

- **NEAS Quality Learning Series provides opportunistic interventions for staff of NEAS Quality Endorsed centres**

Professional development of ELT teachers and staff members is now a staple for centres seeking to invest in and develop their ongoing quality and value offering. NEAS' Quality Learning Series delivers workshops around Australia, with topics that support strategic human resource and operational demands of the sector.

In 2016, over 800 ELT professionals have participated in our workshops, which are provided **free of charge** to the staff of NEAS members. Speakers are sourced from the NEAS team, testing organisations and technology providers.

- **Representation to government**

NEAS Quality Endorsed providers are represented in meetings involving peak bodies, key senior public servants, ministers and senior policy advisors. Topics for discussion over the past year have been related to quality agenda items such as:

- i. Connecting quality assurance and regulation
- ii. English testing and assessment
- iii. The Adult Migrant English Program
- iv. Influencing government policy in international education (eg: ESOS and ELICOS)

NEAS' relationship with policy makers, bureaucrats and elected representatives, maintains a focus on quality AMEP and ELT providers.

- **Sharing successes and quality outcomes in English language teaching**

ELICOS providers continue to experience market growth, and we are pleased to share that NEAS Quality Endorsement is now often sought by agents who seek to refer students to reliable ELT centres. NEAS brand awareness amongst agents has been achieved using communication which includes:

- i. **Digital marketing**

NEAS' digital marketing strategy is centred on our well recognised NEAS News, sent to over to 6,000 agents, teachers, managers, marketing professionals, government agencies, regulators and peak bodies. Readership rate for NEAS News is 22.5%, with articles relating to provider achievements, developments in the sector at large and special interest stories that share success and achievement. The NEAS News provides a critical insight for non-members to engage with and understand the efforts made by members to deliver quality where it counts – in the classroom. NEAS social media strategy incorporates Facebook and Twitter, as channel partners helping to widen the distribution of NEAS News messages through these channels.

- ii. **Study Travel Magazine and industry journal partnerships**

NEAS has a solid partnership with industry-specific print and online media including Study Travel Magazine, ICEF Monitor and the EL Gazette. NEAS utilises press releases, interviews and paid advertising to inform stakeholders about NEAS and our members' activities.

- iii. **Global conferences, agent fairs and workshops**

NEAS attends and represents quality endorsed members at agent workshops and fairs around the world. Our activity continues to increase, with 2016 seeing NEAS represented on the "Team Australia" stand at the ICEF Berlin workshop in collaboration with English Australia, ACPET and Austrade.

NEAS continues to have a presence at the ALPHE UK and ANZA workshops, meeting with agents, other industry associations and quality assurance agencies, sharing with them the diverse range of NEAS' quality endorsed English language teaching providers in Australia.

- **NEAS' conference, roadshows and professional development events**

Our hosted events continue to build the NEAS quality brand locally and internationally, through events that benefit members, their staff and associated stakeholders. Major events hosted and delivered by NEAS during the 2016 financial year included the ELICOS Roadshow and the NEAS ELT Management Conference, as well as supporting the GALEA Conference in London and the QALEN Malta 2015 Symposium.

- i. **NEAS ELT Management Conference**

The 2016 conference achieved participation levels of over 270, with 24 sponsors and exhibitors. The conference was again held on Sydney Harbour at Doltone House, as a wonderful venue that showcases the best of what Sydney has to offer.

- iv. **ELICOS Roundtable roadshow**

The "ELICOS Roundtable" roadshow sought to canvas sector views on whether the *ELICOS National Standards* needed a major revision, or whether it was in fact a solid foundation for quality in the ELT sector in Australia.

Over 100 ELT providers attended Roundtable sessions with providers expressing their views on matters such as class sizes, hours per week required to learn English and minimum teacher qualifications. All participants expressed a common interest in developments around the improvement of quality and standardisation of learning and assessment pedagogy for English language learners.

The output was a report to the Commonwealth Government with recommendations for how quality English language teaching was supported by the current *ELICOS National Standards*. The industry expressed a view that the standards should be maintained as close to their current form as possible.

- v. **QALEN Malta Symposium 2015**

NEAS represented Australia at the QALEN Malta Symposium in September 2015. NEAS was the founder a global syndicate of quality assurance agencies, now known as QALEN. The Quality Assurance in Language Education Network has a common theme of recognising each other's principles and processes under a formal memorandum of understanding.

The inaugural QALEN meeting was held in the September 2014 Quality Symposium in Sydney. The resulting agreement of collaboration between

QA agencies in South Africa, Australia, the United Kingdom, New Zealand, Malta, Canada and the United States benefits local and global members of NEAS via cross jurisdictional recognition, standardisation and application of quality assurance principles and processes.

The next QALEN meeting will be held in Washington in September 2016.

- **Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) and the Assessment Task Bank (ATB)**

NEAS' AMEP Quality Assurance contract with the Department of Education continues to be an understated success for NEAS and AMEP provider efforts to bring a quality offering to learners of English.

The 2016 financial year saw NEAS attend over 90 AMEP provider centres, monitoring compliance across a range of criteria in an effort to support NEAS mission to support "quality in English language teaching".

AMEP providers operate in a hugely diverse geographic radius, from remote far northwest Australia to the centre of Melbourne. A key feature of the NEAS model this contract round, has been to bring the monitoring process "in-house", with assessment undertaken by staff, thus ensuring consistent quality assessment. June 2016 marked the end of the second year of a three year contract for NEAS in undertaking monitoring on behalf of industry for the AMEP.

NEAS has been at the forefront of the formation of a global syndicate of quality assurance agencies, with the common theme of recognising each other's principles and processes under a formal memorandum of understanding

NEAS is pleased to have been identified in a review of the AMEP, as having been confirmed by other stakeholders to have made a "positive contribution to the enhancement of quality in the AMEP".

The Assessment Task Bank is another major Department of Education project delivered by NEAS, and encompasses a standardised bank of over 440 English language assessments. These are available for downloading by English language teachers to deliver to their students, and ensures that an assessment delivered in remote Australia is the same as one delivered in the city.

In the FY2016 year, the ATB recorded a number of notable achievements with over 2,250 registered users, over 110,000 downloads, and ongoing maintenance of the Assessment Task Bank undertaken by the re-recording and redrafting of a range of assessments by the National Working Group under NEAS supervision.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

NEAS would like to extend our thanks to the Commonwealth Department of Education and Training for their active involvement and engaged participation in quality assurance within the AMEP and ATB programmes.

NEAS is also fortunate in enjoying the support of many industry associations including IEAA, UECA, TAFE Directors Australia, ACPET and English Australia. We are grateful to these organisations for their ongoing commitment and ongoing support of quality assurance in the English language teaching sector.

NEAS is governed by a motivated and effective Board of Directors, who have demonstrated their ongoing commitment to NEAS, and are supported by the NEAS Advisory Council. We are pleased to share that joining the Board in 2016 was Ms Christine Bundesen AM, who was welcomed to NEAS as an appointed Independent Director with a wealth of experience from the ELICOS sector. The board is pleased to report that NEAS' financials and our liquidity continue to provide a solid foundation for future growth.

Indeed, the Board and Management of NEAS would like to extend their thanks to the NEAS team, for ensuring that the strategic plan is being successfully implemented.

Finally and most of all, we thank our dedicated quality providers for their continuing support of NEAS' role in assuring quality in international education, and for engaging with us to advise on matters associated with improvements to processes and developments of interest. We acknowledge that the ELICOS sector and quality AMEP providers everywhere are at the forefront of recognising and supporting the value and quality assurance of English language teaching in the classroom.



Denise Taylor

Chair

Mark Raven

Chief Executive

PEOPLE AT NEAS

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Ms Denise Taylor

Chair
appointed June 2012,
Independent Director

appointed February
2012

MEd, Grad Dip Sch Lib,
Dip Tch, Cert Tch,
FAICD



Mr Larry Davies

Independent Director
appointed November
2012

BCom, MCom

Consultant, Windmill
Tilter Consultancy



Mr Seamus Fagan

Director
appointed February 2012

BA, Higher Dip Ed, MA

Director, University of
Newcastle Language
Centre



Ms Heidi Reid

Director
appointed November
2013

BA, Grad Dip Ed, MA
TESOL

Principal, Australian
International College of
English



Mr Adam Kilburn

Director
appointed July 2014

BA, Grad Dip TESOL, MA,
MBA, GAICD

General Manager, College
House Group Australia



Ms Sarah Lance

Independent Director
appointed May 2015

BEd, MBA, GAICD

Director, LikeMinds
Consulting



**Ms Christine BUNDESEN
AM**

Independent Director
appointed December 2015

BA, MA, MACE, MAICD

Principal cmbGlobal

EXECUTIVE STAFF



Mr Mark Raven

Chief Executive



Ms Ana Bratkovic

General Manager



Ms Marion Bagot

Special Projects Coordinator



Ms Margaret Kinvig

Government Liaison
Coordinator



Ms Lauren O'Hern

Quality Assessor



Ms Diane Price

Quality Assessor



Ms Erika Layton

Book Keeper



Ms Adriana Leomil

Marketing and
Administration Officer

HIGHLIGHTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

1. NEAS QUALITY ASSURANCE

FRAMEWORK WITH ACTIVITY SUMMARY

NEAS Quality Endorsement relies on a stakeholder-driven feedback model based on inputs from students, teachers, administrative and marketing staff. Inputs comprise anonymous surveys, focus groups and meetings grounded in the NEAS Quality Assurance Framework. The Quality Assurance Framework was updated this year to introduce a sixth Quality Area focusing on the welfare of students aged under 18.

The Framework now comprises the key areas:

- A. Teaching, Learning and Assessment
- B. The Student Experience
- C. Resources and Facilities
- D. Administration, Management and Staffing
- E. Promotion and Student Recruitment.
- F. Welfare of Students Aged Under 18 Years

From July 2015 until June 30 2016, 85 Quality Review Visits were conducted by NEAS staff throughout Australia, and 12 offshore. Over 9,000 students and upwards of 2,000 staff members completed the anonymous surveys. Quality Review Visits to members are scheduled every two years. NEAS supports the maintenance of Quality Endorsement through its annual desk review, workshops delivered through the Quality Learning Series and the annual Conference, frequent updates through NEAS News and supporting resources on the NEAS website.

Members can access the Quality Assurance Framework and supporting documents such as *The Plain Guide* on the NEAS website.

As at 30 June 2016

NEAS centres Australia	163
QRVs in Australia	85 (52%)
NEAS centres International	34
QRVs International	25 (74%)

2. ADULT MIGRANT ENGLISH PROGRAM (AMEP)

NEAS undertook quality monitoring of AMEP providers throughout 2015-2016, with a total of 97 delivery locations across 27 contract regions assessed. Assessments highlighted quality service delivery across all states and territories, with all providers focused on meeting client needs efficiently and effectively.

NEAS also continued to liaise closely with the Department of Education and Training, meeting throughout the reporting period to discuss NEAS' role in ELT quality assurance, developments in the Assessment Task Bank (ATB), operational improvements and future possibilities for the AMEP.

NEAS continued its management of the ATB, which at 30 June 2015 had 2,262 authorised users. NEAS facilitated the National Working Group, representing all providers nationally, to review ATB tasks and engage in professional development. NEAS uploaded 41 newly validated tasks to the ATB web portal – the ATB comprised a total of 505 tasks across all CSWE levels at 30 June 2016. A project commenced in 2015 to collect tasks that assess learning outcomes for which there are currently no associated tasks on the ATB. An additional 35 learning outcomes now have associated tasks, representing a significant improvement in the utility of the ATB.

NEAS is delighted to be working with four ELT students who have volunteered to assist us with reviewing ATB tasks to ensure they offer users a greater level of compliance with the RTO Standards 2015. All volunteers wish to pursue a career in the AMEP and we greatly appreciate all of their efforts over the past few months.



NEAS is looking forward to participating in the upcoming Request for Tender for AMEP delivery

services and look forward to continuing to work with the Department of Education and Training, AMEP providers and the broader AMEP community.

3. QUALITY LEARNING SERIES SUMMARY REPORT

The NEAS Quality Learning Series (QLS) initiative was launched in 2014 as a professional development opportunity for NEAS member centres. QLS sessions are planned to reflect issues that arise out of NEAS quality assurance processes, including the Annual Return of information and Quality Review visits, as well as suggestions from NEAS members.

QLS sessions from July to December 2015 included:

- Practical Assessment Validation
- Tools for IELTS Test Preparation
- Unpacking Online Marketing with Google Analytics
- Writing Learning Outcomes

A total of 14 QLS sessions were offered during this period, in Brisbane, Gold Coast, Melbourne, Perth and Sydney, Cairns and Adelaide sessions having been run earlier in the year. As interest in QLS sessions has grown, numbers have had to be limited and several sessions have had waiting lists. Feedback from participants was most encouraging, with positive responses running at 98.7%.

The 2016 QLS series developed on areas covered in the 2015 series and issues raised by participants on those earlier sessions. The series commenced in February, with 13 sessions delivered between then and the end of June.

An important feature of the 2016 series is the importance of NEAS partnerships with organisations whose support has been invaluable. The series as a whole is sponsored by guard.me, as well as reflecting NEAS' relationships with IELTS and TOEFL, both of whom have delivered presentations on teaching and assessing.

Sessions delivered during the period included:

- Assessing against learning outcomes
- Designing a blended learning solution
- Enhancing the student experience
- Online assessment: Strategies for success (TOEFL)
- Strategies for teaching IELTS listening and reading (IELTS)

- Working with the NEAS syllabus template

Survey responses indicated that QLS sessions overwhelmingly attracted teachers and academic managers, with 97% of respondents indicating that they found sessions useful, and less than 2% disagreeing. Comments indicate that participants particularly value the practical activities, opportunities to ask questions, and the chance to share ideas with colleagues.

As QLS sessions are free to NEAS members, we depend on the generosity of member centres who agreed to host them. Our thanks this year go to Australian Pacific College, Bradford College, Cambridge International College, CQU Melbourne, Curtin English, ILSC, Impact English, Inforum, Kaplan, Langports, Melbourne City Institute of Education, Melbourne Institute of Technology, Phoenix Academy, Sarina Russo Institute and UTS: Insearch.

4. GOVERNMENT RELATIONS (ASQA, TEQSA, BOARD OF STUDIES)

ASQA and NEAS continue to enjoy a strong collaborative relationship and one which adds value to NEAS members, who choose to invest in quality.

NEAS' Traffic Light system of risk management continues to be a feature of support from ASQA, with NEAS now also being admitted to the ASQA Panel of Advisors. This development involves NEAS conducting ELICOS audits on behalf of ASQA for vocational and stand-alone ELT providers, until June 2019.

TEQSA is also engaged in an ongoing dialogue with NEAS, whereby co-required documentation is recognised via a single submission. This collaborative element of the NEAS / TEQSA relationship has evolved to consider how NEAS Quality Endorsement can provide greater value to TEQSA in reducing the burden of compliance for providers of English language teaching.

The Queensland Department of Education continues to recognise NEAS in legislation as a baseline compliance requirement for high school providers of ELT courses to international students, and NEAS continues to work with the NSW Board of Studies to conduct quality assurance assessments on independent NSW schools which enrol ELICOS students.

5. NEAS INTERNATIONAL

In June 2016, NEAS had a total of 34 international centres, with 25 of those centres given the NEAS “tick” of quality endorsement, assisting in raising NEAS’ profile in the South-East Asian region and supporting its international members with their continual improvement processes.

Country	Number of Centres
Vietnam	25
Cambodia	4
Indonesia	3
Singapore	1
UAE	1

NEAS launched its stakeholder-driven feedback model to its international members in 2015-16. Cambodia’s Australian Centre for Education (ACE) was the first international member to participate in the stakeholder-driven feedback model for its three Phnom Penh campuses along with its campus in Siem Reap. Quality review visits were conducted at all four campuses in August 2015 and endorsement was finalised in September 2015.

Between 17th May and 3rd June 2016, NEAS embarked on its largest quality review process, with ILA Vietnam putting 20 of its centres up for quality endorsement. Review visits were conducted in Ho Chi Minh City, Hanoi, Danang, Vung Tau, Bien Hoa and Binh Duong, with visits in Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi clustering centres for focus groups to allow for the process to be completed in a three-week timeframe.

JCU Singapore became NEAS’ first international quality-endorsed university in June 2016.

Building on existing relationships in Cambodia, in June 2016 NEAS signed an MOU with a Phnom-Penh based NGO, Voice. This has laid the foundation for the development of Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives for both NEAS and its member centres to support Voice’s crisis management work and education projects on a grass-roots level in Phnom Penh.

6. NEAS ELT MANAGEMENT

CONFERENCE

Over 270 participants attended the 2016 NEAS Management Conference held at Doltone House in Sydney. The two days of professional development showcased “Out of the Box” ideas and presentations, and gave participants from overseas as well as from Australia the opportunity to share their experiences on Sydney’s dazzling harbour.

Bookended by the jocularly of Thom Jones and the inspiration of Australian of the Year Local Hero, Cath Keenan, the program delivered participants a wide range of fresh and at times thought provoking presentations on areas embracing Thought Leadership, Pedagogic Disruption, Collaboration and Intrapreneurship in ELT.

NEAS was very pleased to welcome QALen partners from Malta and New Zealand as well as international sponsors, speakers and participants to share in the environment of collaboration and cooperation.

Dinner guests enjoyed a sumptuous menu while entertained and challenged by The Chaser’s Chris Taylor as he served up his own satirical reflections on life, politics and the English language.

NEAS thanks the generous sponsors whose support contributes to the continuing success of the Conference.

CAMTESOL 2015 CONFERENCE

The conference theme, “Promoting Autonomy in Language Teaching and Learning”, focussed on an aspect of learning that has tended to be addressed more in research than in teaching practice, but is a significant aspect of the NEAS Quality Assurance model.

The [CamTESOL Conference](#) is the premier English language education event in the ASEAN region. The 12th Annual CamTESOL Conference was held at the Institute of Technology Cambodia (ITC) on 20-21 February 2016, with the theme *Promoting Autonomy in Language Teaching and Learning*.

The conference was opened by H. E. Minister Hang Chuon Naron of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS), H.E. William A. Heidt of the US Embassy and Mr Simon Fellows of the Australian Embassy in Phnom Penh. Registration for the conference totalled 1,725, among whom

685 participants came from 34 countries specifically for the event. There were 350 provincial teachers at the conference sponsored by various individual and institutional donors, including one sponsored by NEAS.

The conference presented 493 papers and workshops as well as poster presentations. Featured speakers included Australians Alex Barthel and Professor Rosie Wickert.



NEAS once again sponsored and facilitated the CamTESOL Regional ELT Leadership Forum, which was held at the Cambodiana Hotel on the afternoon of Friday 19 February. The forum attracted 101 participants from 12 countries, with attendance almost double that of 2015. Most of the attendees were managers and leaders in the ELT field from South-East and East Asia. This forum provides a platform for regional managers and leaders to learn and share best practices in ELT management, with a selection of practical breakout sessions and opportunities for professional networking.

NEAS also presented a well received conference workshop on Practical Assessment Validation. This is an area NEAS has been addressing for some time both in Australia and with our offshore centres, so it was encouraging to observe how engagement with quality assessment continues to develop. NEAS representatives also made contact with ELT centres expressing an interest in NEAS quality assurance.

NEAS' ongoing attendance at and support of the CamTESOL Conference serves to raise NEAS' profile internationally, and particularly in the South-East Asian region, where many participants are located. The event provides opportunities for NEAS to showcase its quality assurance work and Australian education.

7. OTHER CONFERENCES (ALPHE, ACPET, EA, IEAA)

Dates	Conference
25 Aug	TAFE Directors – Sydney
27 – 28 Aug	ACPET Conference – Melbourne
4 – 13 Sept	Alphe – London - UK Malta QA Symposium – Malta
23 – 25 Sept	English Australia – Brisbane
6 – 9 Oct	AIEC – Adelaide
1 – 3 Nov	ICEF – Berlin – Germany
19 – 20 Nov	DIBP Conference – Melbourne
21 Nov	UECA PD FEST Conference – Melbourne
21 Nov	UECA PD FEST Conference – Melbourne
19 – 21 Feb	CamTESOL – Cambodia
12 – 14 Apr	ANZA – Melbourne
12 – 13 May	NEAS Management Conference – Sydney Launch of NEAS Benchmarking – Sydney
14 May	UECA PD Fest – Sydney
Ongoing	Quality Learning Series