



AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL OF TESOL ASSOCIATIONS

PROPOSAL FOR AN AMEP ADVISORY BODY

Rationale

A central recommendation of the most recent AMEP review was the creation of an AMEP Advisory Committee, viz.:

The department should establish an AMEP Advisory Committee, representing all key stakeholders, to oversee change, innovation and continuous improvement in the AMEP.

(Social Compass, 2019. Evaluation of the Adult Migrant English Program New Business Model, p. 22)

The report pointed out that “*with better expert advisory structures, some major challenges and unintended consequences of implementation [of the previous contract] may have been avoided.*” It noted that “*the organisational change literature argues that the active engagement of staff delivering programs is central to effective program redesign*”. Essential to continuous improvement is making use of “*the expertise of AMEP teachers and service providers, who are at the forefront of program delivery.*”

In September 2020, the Department of Home Affairs appointed an AMEP Advisory Committee of 7 members for “*an initial period of six months.*” Its role was to “*oversee reform implementation, innovation and continuous improvement in the AMEP*”. That Committee was disbanded in July 2021.

The following proposal is for an advisory body that is **different to the previous Committee, in that:**

- advice from the advisory body goes directly to both the Immigration Minister and the Department
- the advisory body is set up by the Department (and ultimately the Minister) but its membership is nominated by stakeholders and approved by the Minister
- the advisory body has an initial term of office for 3 years, albeit with changes of membership, but its continuing existence is assumed
- confidentiality requirements are limited.

Purpose of the advisory body

To provide regular and on-going advice to the Immigration Minister and Department of Home Affairs on all matters professionally-related to the AMEP.

Membership

The membership of the body to represent:

ACTA (2 members)

AMEP providers (2-3 members nominated by the AMEP managers’ group)

AMEP teachers (1-2 members proposed jointly by ACTA and provider members)

Settlement Council of Australia (1 member)

Australian Education Union & Independent Education Union (1 each)

Members to be nominated by the bodies they represent and approved by the Minister.

Membership to be reviewed & reconfirmed annually.

Commencement: as soon as possible and well in advance of finalising the RTF.

Initial term: 3 years.

Meetings

The advisory body to be chaired and given executive support by Department of Home Affairs AMEP Team officials. Other DHA and interdepartmental personnel in attendance as appropriate.

Confidentiality:

- Agendas and minutes **not** confidential; circulated to all AMEP providers and other stakeholders.
- Supporting papers released by agreement with DHA
- Details of actual meeting discussions subject to confidentiality agreements.
- Members of the body free to speak to stakeholders about items detailed in the minutes but not actual meeting discussions.

Timing: initially at least monthly; later as agreed.

Possible Topics for Initial Meeting Discussions & Advice

1. The forthcoming RTF:
 - a. Optimal timing
 - b. How best to obtain feedback on a draft RTF
2. Developing an authentic and effective AMEP outcomes and quality assurance framework
3. Contracting for the AMEP: how to maximise effectiveness, efficiency and quality
4. Feedback on and review of the Information Management system.
5. Teacher recruitment, qualifications and professional development.
6. On-going review of the curriculum, approaches to curriculum and relationship to ASQA requirements.
7. Effective development & utilisation of AMEP resources, including recovery of lost quality resources.
