



ACTA President Report 2025

My President's report summarises key ACTA achievements over the last year in relation to our core objectives and highlights some of the exciting opportunities as well as challenges that lie ahead as outlined in our draft workplan.

1. Advocacy and consultancy

The first of ACTA's four core objectives is to ensure access to appropriate English language instruction for speakers of other languages and dialects, which means we spend a lot of our time on advocacy and consultancy activities, particularly with the federal government and ACARA. To this end we rely heavily on expertise and input from our consultancy groups, see [Advocacy – Australian Council of TESOL Associations](#), to build on the ability of ACTA to share what is happening in member states and territories, both achievements and challenges, and to advocate for improvements to policy and practice in relation to the provision of EALD in all sectors.

In the school area, ACTA has been continuing its work developing a national EALD “measure” as part of the revision of the Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia (MFSA) to be initiated mid-year to ensure it collects essential data on ‘English as an additional language or dialect’ (EAL/D) for identification, funding and accountability. Many thanks in particular to Cath Hudson and Denise Angelo who have been meeting with members of the Schools and IEALD CGs and the leadership team regularly to advance this work. The work on the EALD measure has also been informed by recent research undertaken by Lucy Lu and her colleagues from AERO – Lucy has been asked to present this work to all interested members of ACTA associations, including the combined Schools and IEALD CGs on Tuesday 8 April 7 pm AEST.

ACTA has also had several very productive meeting with the CEO of ACARA Stephen Gniel and the Acting Senior Manager, Curriculum, Julie King, at their request to give us an update on the changes we suggested to the EALD advice and elaborations and its next steps – including further work on the EALD progressions and on advice on Indigenous EALD learners as well as on communication and networking to support professional development. Huge thanks to Michael Michell and Marg Turnbull for their work in preparing for these meetings.

In addition, ACTA made a submission to the Senate Education and Employment Legislation Committee investigating the bill proposing changes in funding to enable the new Better and Fairer Schools Agreement (BFSA) that provides the framework for school funding for the next 10 years (To read the submission, go to [Advocacy – Australian Council of TESOL Associations](#), also see [2024 November- ACTA's Submission to Senate Education Inquiry into the Better and Fairer Schools Bill – Australian Council of TESOL Associations](#)). ACTA highlighted that the BFSA did not explicitly mention EALD at all, and hence there were no safeguards or provision for English language learners. As the submission was being prepared, the NT Government announced that funding for its remaining nine bilingual programs would be pooled with all other special needs funding, in line with the Agreement with the Commonwealth. These programs would have collapsed, because the funding would be spread too thinly to maintain them. In close collaboration, Helen Moore and Liz Easton,

ATESOL NT President, wrote a section of the ACTA submission on the NT bilingual programs, showing how pooling special needs funding had a negative effect for speakers of languages other than English and also the employment of Indigenous teachers. The NT Government then reversed its decision. The notes of these various activities are on the google drive under ACTA Activities Schools Consultancy Group, https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1GaiODywcQPbl_AvQUPYjhGkIhNn0MsbQ?usp=drive_link.

The Adult ESOL Consultancy Group, led by ACTA Vice-President Helen Moore, has also been particularly active in responding to a Parliamentary Inquiry into government contracts, including the AMEP, which began early in 2024. In consultation with the ACTA Adult ESOL Consultancy Group, Helen drafted a submission on ACTA's behalf. She later met with Deputy Chair, Senator Linda Reynolds (Lib. WA) and then on 4th December gave evidence at an Inquiry hearing. Subsequently, she provided written answers to questions asked by Mr Brian Mitchell (Labor member for Lyons, Tas.). The Inquiry then sent her further written questions on notice regarding the ACTA submission, which is a good sign that they are engaging with our advocacy. For links to the ACTA submission, the Statement tabled in the Inquiry hearing, Hansard from the hearing, and subsequent material sent to the Inquiry, please check out the ACTA website at [Advocacy – Australian Council of TESOL Associations](#), click on 2024 December – Parliamentary Inquiry into AMEP Contract Management; also see [2024 December- Parliamentary Inquiry into AMEP Contract Management *Updated – Australian Council of TESOL Associations](#)). I would like to acknowledge once again the enormous amount of work this involved and particularly Helen's incredible leadership (and persistence) in this space. As one of her fellow councillors commented, it was "awe-inspiring"!

ACTA also continues to actively contribute to and leverage its alliances with a range of other professional and educational organisations, including the [Australian Alliance of Associations in Education](#) (AAAE), whose meetings are regularly attended by Marg Turnbull and myself, and the Foundation for Learning and Literacy (FLL), for which ACTA Councillors Fran Murray and Ashwina Gotame are our representatives. ACTA's contribution to the Foundation for Learning and Literacy Symposium, see [Foundation for Learning and Literacy](#), is still online, see <https://tesol.org.au/2024-september-actas-contribution-to-the-foundation-for-learning-and-literacy-symposium-is-online/>. A huge thanks to Fran Murray for leading this work on "The role of First Language in Learning: The Power of Literature in students' First Language in developing Bilingualism and Biculturalism" with co-presenters Jacinta Alimankini, Rachel Kantilla (Wurrumiyanga) and Anita Painter (Barunga).

As I said last year, however, invitations for ongoing collaboration with the federal government and other key organisations are very positive, but at the same time such work is stretching our resources, and we badly need more help from the wider membership to ensure we can make the most of these opportunities.

2. Professional development

The second of ACTA's four core objectives is to ensure quality professional learning. To this end ACTA has recently reviewed how it can better support member associations with advertising their professional learning, see <https://tesol.org.au/professionallearning/>, or resources, see [Resources – Australian Council of TESOL Associations](#) through improved links on our website, and other social media and through a regular weekly newsletter. For more information for member associations, see https://docs.google.com/document/d/1nW51QWtCLk1fQ5T_cOoOoiAbKp_vCZ66Z/edit?usp=sharing&oid=105859991035690461601&rtpof=true&sd=true. Events to be in by 4pm Tuesdays to be included in the newsletter that week. Planning also continues

for the ACT- ATESOL (NSW) International conference in Sydney in October 2026, and for online forums on key topics of national interest.

3. Research

In terms of our objective to promote the study, research and development of TESOL at local, regional, national and international levels, last year ACTA funded an inaugural ACTA research project led by ACTA councillors Toni Dobinson, Julian Chen and colleagues at Curtin together with Michel Michell and Marg Turnbull and colleagues in ATESOL NSW. They are completing a wide-ranging study examining EALD teacher education and teacher experience in Australian schools. Full details are available on our website.

In addition ACTA again participated in the selection panel for the Penny McKay Award 2024, won by our very own Susanne Stanyer (see [2024 December- Announcement: Winner of the 2024 Penny McKay Memorial Award – Australian Council of TESOL Associations](#))– we look forward to the featured presentation of her research at the ALTAANZ online conference later in the year. Many thanks to Toni Dickinson who was the ACTA representative on the Selection Panel. More details about the award for 2025 are available at [Who we are – Australian Council of TESOL Associations](#), closing date 31 October, 2025.

One idea to explore going forward, particularly given the need for specific research and development of position statements around hot topics like the phonics check, is an unpaid research internship program for HDR students, similar but more focused than the internships we have hosted before.

4. Publications

In terms of publications, our journal *TESOL in Context (TiC)*, see www.tesolincontext.org.au, continues to go from strength to strength under the direction of our coordinator Fiona Tang and the ongoing work of our team of editors. A major achievement this year was the acceptance of TiC for indexing in Scopus, one of the largest and most prestigious abstract and citation databases of peer-reviewed literature. This achievement not only enhances the visibility and credibility of our journal but also ensures that our published research reaches a global audience, fostering greater academic collaboration and impact. We are incredibly proud of this significant milestone, reflecting the rigorous standards and scholarly excellence of our contributors and consolidating our academic reputation.

Thanks to Fiona too for ensuring a smooth introduction to a new editorial team for 2025-2028: Dr David Wei Dai from University College London (England, UK), Dr Ward Peters from Monash University (Australia), and Dr Sal Consoli from The University of Edinburgh (Scotland, UK). They will join our existing editorial team comprising Dr Sue Ollerhead, Associate Professor Julie Choi, and Dr Shashi Nallaya, to ensure TESOL in Context remains a leading publication in the field and increases its impact internationally. We would also like to acknowledge our gratitude to Dr Averil Grieve and Dr Sharon Yahalom, who completed their term as co-editors at the end of 2024.

We have just seen the release of the first papers in a special issue on EAL/D in Initial Teacher Education and Schools - Vol 33 No 2, 2025 with a guest editorial team composed of Julie Choi and Mei French. Fiona has also expanded the pool of reviewers and we are currently reviewing the structure and funding of TiC to ensure it is the most effective system to manage both the journal and our longer series of background papers. We are also proceeding with the publication short fact sheets on current “hot” topics such as EALD learners and the science of reading, which will be housed on our website.

5. Publicity and dissemination

Our Consultancy Support officer Susanne Stanyer has continued to do a wonderful job maintaining and improving our website, see tesol.org.au, and consolidating and strengthening our social media profile, including Facebook, Linked-in, and X (formerly Twitter). A particular focus this year has been supporting the publication of state and territory association events, especially online professional development opportunities, and developing a database of presenters – a work in progress. A new avenue to explore to raise the profile and awareness of the organisation is the development of other non-monetary biennial awards, including perhaps a Lifetime Achievement Award, a Professional Development Award and Media Award to recognise outstanding contributions to the field.

6. Governance and internal organisation

The past year has been marked by the continuation of our focus on developing greater transparency and accessibility of information and clearer principles for operation. The increase in each state and territory's base number of councillors at the last AGM from one to two was, in hindsight, very timely given the continuing decline in paying membership of several of our member associations and the resignation of VicTESOL (2023, 247 members).

Member Association	2023 Membership	2024 Membership	Change
WATESOL	151	162	+11
ATESOL NT	77	45	-32
SATESOL	23	47	+24
QATESOL	226	252	+26
ATESOL ACT	52	44	-8
ATESOL NSW	101	77	-24
TasTESOL	50	51	+1
Total	680	678	-2

The ACTA Constitution and Protocols Working Party, with the addition of Ronan Kelly as a member at large, has continued to bring suggested improvements to our Constitution to the Council and member associations for discussion as well as identify areas which need working rules or protocols, with a plan to present these consolidated changes formally to the 2026 AGM for ratification.

At the same time, we have improved our budgetary processes so we have a clear idea of our longer term goals and budgetary constraints. As I indicated last year, due to the long gap between ACTA conferences (last one in Brisbane in 2022 and next one not until 2026), ACTA has no significant income other than its capitation revenue (excluding bank interest and copyright revenue) – consequently we are running a deficit budget so we are very careful with our expenditure and have made further savings this year with TiC copyediting and with the auditing/reviewing of our finances, both of which are now undertaken by volunteers, thus saving about \$5000 pa. In particular, I would like thank Mark Fraser, ATESOL NSW Treasurer and our volunteer reviewer, for his thorough review and Fiona Tang, our TiC coordinator, for her initiatives in cost-cutting. Thanks too to our Public Officer Bronwyn Singh.

We have also continued to strengthen our consultancy groups with Gil Edmiston from TasTESOL joining Helen Moore as co-convenor of the adult ESL group and planning to expand its activities beyond advocacy into professional sharing. Ronan Kelly has also joined me as co-convenor of the Teacher Education CG which is planning an imminent launch with over 100 invitations to a presentation on the results of the audit of core and elective EALD units in initial teacher education as part of the ACTA research project. The Refugee Youth CG has evolved into the Tertiary EALD CG, co-convened by Sophie Arkoudis, Sue Starfield, and Toni Williams. It will continue its strong focus on access and equity but also examine the

broader curriculum and assessment barriers and supports for EALD students in tertiary education. The Schools and Indigenous EALD CGs continue to expand their range of activities and membership, but we are still looking for new convenors for the Early Childhood Education CG – volunteers welcome. Finally, a priority going forward is to further strengthen succession planning and mentorship of new Councillors.

7. Final acknowledgments and thanks

I would conclude by thanking the ACTA Council for all its support over the last twelve months, in particular the current members of the executive Marg Turnbull and Sophie Arkoudis as Secretary and Treasurer respectively, and Helen Moore who is standing down as VP after a number of years in that role but thankfully continuing her work with the adult and IEALD Consultancy groups. I would also like to farewell our outgoing ACTA Councillors, Julian Chen (who is continuing to work with TIC) and Bahar Khaterivayeghan from WATESOL, and Nikki Hanssen from ATESOL NT (both of whom I am sure will continue to be involved in ACTA's CGs) and to welcome our new Councillors from WATESOL and TasTESOL as well as all those returning Councillors from our other member associations. The nice balance of new blood and old hands should make for an effective mix of creativity and continuity.

I look forward to a busy but productive year ahead!

Chris Davison
ACTA President

20 March 2025

Appendix: ACTA Workplan 2024-25

Note priorities not in any specific order.

Key activity	Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3	Priority 4
1. Advocacy	Continue frequent direct meetings with national organisations, including Dept of Education, Home Affairs, ACARA, AERO, individual Ministers and staff	Continue to leverage our existing alliances (e.g., AAAE, FLL) to promote EALD issues nationally	Respond to calls for submissions and advocacy on core EALD topics at state, territory and national levels as necessary	Continue to draw on our consultancy groups (CGs) for advice and input on key issues and form Working groups as needed
2. Professional Learning	Strengthen publicity and support for PL by member associations	Develop a national database of available presenters for PL and a guide for the on-line sharing of teacher resources/action research	Conduct forums on nationally significant topics, e.g., AERO research, state of the nation, ITE.	Ensure smooth preparation and extensive publicity for 2026 ACTA-ATESOL Conference
3. Research	Complete ACTA research project and facilitate dissemination through CGs, forums and social media	Continue to support the Penny McKay doctoral thesis award	Research key issues, e.g. Science of reading, impact of phonics check on EALD students and teachers	Re-launch an unpaid research internship program for HDR students
4. Publications	Review and restructure support and funding for TESOL in Context (TiC)	Re-launch background papers and link to TiC	Publish fact sheets on key issues, e.g., Science of reading (authored by IEALD group)	
5. Publicity and dissemination	Consolidate and strengthen social media profile; continually improve website	Enhance internal and external communications, e.g., regular updates to member associations,	Explore the development of other non-monetary awards, e.g., Lifetime Achievement Award? Professional	

Key activity	Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3	Priority 4
		weekly newsletters	Development Award. Media Award? to recognise outstanding contributions to the field.	
6. Governance	Continue to improve clarity and effectiveness of ACTA constitution and working rules	Further strengthen succession planning and mentorship of new Councillors, e.g., round table meeting of new councillors and President/VP	Further improve our budgetary position by careful financial management and increased support of member associations to drive increases in membership	Continue to build the profile and membership of our CGs to provide expertise and visibility around key issues