



## ACTA President Report 2026

My President's report summarises key ACTA achievements over the last year in relation to our core objectives and highlights some of the major 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, thus our advocacy and consultancy activities are a major priority, particularly those activities with the federal government and ACARA. To achieve this we rely heavily on expertise and input from our established consultancy groups, with many thanks to Gil Edmiston from TasTESOL and Helen Moore co-convenors of the adult ESL group, Ronan Kelly and Russell Cross co-convenors of the Teacher Education CG, the Schools CG co-convened by Michael Mcihell and myself, and the Indigenous EALD CG co-convened by Liz Easton and Helen Moore. As can be seen from our website, [Advocacy – Australian Council of TESOL Associations](#), the CGs play a critical role in enabling ACTA to share what is happening in member states and territories, to advocate for improvements to policy and practice in relation to the provision of EALD in all sectors.

The newly established Teacher Education CG had its first meeting In May 2025 with 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. A further two meetings are planned for this year - many thanks to Ronan Kelly and Russell Cross for their leadership.

The Adult ESOL Consultancy Group has also been particularly active in responding to the on-going issue of government contracts in the AMEP with the CG meeting at least once or twice a month for the last year to identify and discuss unresolved issues in the AMEP with ongoing meetings being held with the Department of Home Affairs as well as one with the advisor for the new Minister responsible for that portfolio, the Hon Anne Aly in August. This was followed by a number of meetings with the Assistant Secretary, Migrant English and Language Services Branch in the Department of Home Affairs, about the termination of the current tender process for the AMEP and the modifications to the QA process - there has also been some useful media commentary, see [https://www.abc.net.au/news/2026-03-14/adult-migrant-english-program-failing-students-educators-say/106438170?utm\\_source=abc\\_news\\_web&utm\\_medium=content\\_shared&utm\\_campaign=abc\\_news\\_web](https://www.abc.net.au/news/2026-03-14/adult-migrant-english-program-failing-students-educators-say/106438170?utm_source=abc_news_web&utm_medium=content_shared&utm_campaign=abc_news_web). I would like to acknowledge once again the enormous amount of work this advocacy has involved and particularly Helen's leadership of this incredibly dedicated consultancy group

In the schools area, ACTA has continued its productive relationship with ACARA who took up our suggestion that Michael Michell undertake some further minor revision of the EALD progressions. In addition there have been multiple interactions around the review of the senior secondary EAL/D curriculum, and input and modifications to ACARA's criteria for text selection. Many thanks to Marg Turnbull, Liz Easton and Gae Nastasi for their help with that important work.

The Indigenous EAL Consultancy group also met a number of times to compile and present a submission to respond to the government's review of education for First Nations students. Also in the schools area, work on the ACTA phonics position paper is almost complete after multiple consultations with the IEALD and Schools CGs and the wider ACTA membership. The final draft is to be circulated to the combined Schools and IEALD CGs shortly with a national launch and forum tentatively scheduled for the week beginning 14 May 2026. Many thanks again to the writers involved in this project.

Less happily, ACTA's development of a national EALD "measure" as part of the revision of the Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia (MFSA) has had to be suspended as the federal government has not yet achieved any consensus with states and systems about the parameters of the Measurement Framework, and progress on that front has also been impacted by the decision to set up a new consolidated Learning and Teaching Commission.

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 Ronan Kelly, Marg Turnbull and myself. ACTA, through AAAE, is consulting with the Federal government about the terms of reference for the new Learning and Teaching Commission, and also helping to develop a position statement on learning and teaching which aims to articulate AAAE's collective position on effective teaching, evidence-informed practice, and the role of teacher professional associations in shaping national education policy. The draft can be accessed using the link below - please let me have any feedback, see [https://docs.google.com/document/d/1pws5XdYW\\_NMC1ptDQi57ra9SGfM\\_xaPn/edit#heading=h.tczf33qc7erx](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1pws5XdYW_NMC1ptDQi57ra9SGfM_xaPn/edit#heading=h.tczf33qc7erx).

ACTA also advocated strongly for EAL/D interests at the recent national Teacher Workforce Roundtable in Canberra on 19 September 2025. This roundtable, hosted by the Commonwealth, was convened to consider possible next steps following the National Teacher Workforce Action Plan. Before the roundtable, our Vice-President Ronan Kelly attended a pre-roundtable hosted by the Australian Alliance of Associations in Education (AAAE - <https://aaae.edu.au/>), an alliance of national professional teacher associations of which ACTA is a founding member, to help inform the AAAE's input. Issues related to EAL/D raised at the roundtable were:

1. Teacher Standards: Inclusive practices and EAL/D are not embedded strongly enough.
2. Standards and accreditation: International recognition of qualifications is valuable, especially for diverse and EAL/D contexts.
3. Supporting Wellbeing and Workplace Safety: 25% of students are EAL/D learners—teachers need stronger training and support in ITE and PD. ACTA advocates for EAL/D units in ITE programs.
4. Enhancing Workforce Data and Governance: EAL/D student growth demands more training and PD; every teacher needs EAL/D expertise.

AAAE held a follow up forum on Monday 10 November that was attended by Ronan Kelly.

ACTA also supports the work of the Foundation for Learning and Literacy (FLL), through our representatives ACTA Councillors Fran Murray and Ashwina Gotame, see ACTA's contribution on the [Foundation for Learning and Literacy](#) website - many thanks to Fran in particular for this pioneering work.

## **2. Professional development**

The second of ACTA's four core objectives is to ensure quality professional learning. To this end ACTA has continued to 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 regular email and newsletter updates. 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](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1nW51QWtCLk1fQ5T_cOoOoiAbKp_vCZ66Z/edit?usp=sharing&oid=105859991035690461601&rtpof=true&sd=true).

A major initiative this year has been the return of our biennial conferences after the disruption of Covid with the next ACTA International conference, hosted by ATESOL (NSW) to be held in Sydney on 1-3 October 2026. The call for papers closed on 28 February 2026 with 125 submissions currently under review. In addition, there is a range of featured invited symposia and ACTA colloquia, see <https://tesol.org.au/conference/>, including an opening plenary by Prof Rhonda Oliver and four featured symposia on artificial intelligence, academic literacies, equity and multilingual learners and school EAL learners in the curriculum. A pre-conference brunch meeting of the Council is planned, as well as afternoon workshops of EALD Managers and of interested contributors to TiC. There will also be presentations by the research team funded by ACTA to explore EALD in schools and initial teacher education and by Pauline Jones and Bev Deriawianka about the newly established Language and Literacy in Education Network (LLEN) network. Early bird registration for the conference opened on 1 December 2025, and we have a steady stream of registrations.

Another initiative this year has been the establishment of national forums to present major new research, policy or curriculum developments. The first forum saw Lucy Lu and her colleagues from [AERO present](#) on their research into how long it takes to learn English alongside the curriculum to all interested members of ACTA associations, including the combined Schools and IEALD CGs on 8 April 2025. A second combined forum of the School and IEALD CGs was held on 9 September 6-7.30pm AEST with Simone Cassidy on the interface between additional needs and EAL/D based on her Churchill scholarship – for details, see <https://www.churchilltrust.com.au/project/dorothy-and-brian-wilson-churchill-fellowship-to-explore-impactful-and-equitable-processes-to-support-the-learning-of-refugee-background-students/>. Further national forums are planned on policy and on phonics in 2026.

### 3. Research

In terms of our objective to promote the study, research and development of TESOL at local, regional, national and international levels, ACTA has supported 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 in the final stages of completing a wide-ranging study examining EALD teacher education and teacher experience in Australian schools, including an update of the [State of EAL/D Education in Schools National Survey](#), and will present their findings at the ACTA International conference in October this year. Full details are available on our website.

In addition ACTA again participated in the selection panel for the Penny McKay Award, with the winner of the Penny McKay Memorial Award for 2025 being Dr Dean Ryschka for his doctoral thesis undertaken at the Queensland University of Technology and entitled *Acculturation of English as an Additional Language (EAL) Students to Australian Secondary Schooling: Issues of Culture, Social Cohesion and English Language Learning*. Dean was supervised by Professor Karen Dooley, Associate Professor Nerida Spina and Adjunct Associate Professor Margaret Kettle. You can read Dean's

abstract and thesis at [QUT ePrints](#). More details about the award for 2026 are available at [Who we are – Australian Council of TESOL Associations](#), closing date 31 October, 2026.

One strategy that has not been adopted yet is an unpaid research internship program for HDR students, similar but more focused than the internships we have hosted before, but we will proceed with that this year.

#### **4. Publications**

In terms of publications, our journal *TESOL in Context (TiC)*, see [www.tesolincontext.org.au](http://www.tesolincontext.org.au), continues to improve in terms of both the quantity and quality of its publications under the innovative and dedicated leadership of Managing Editor Fiona Tang and her teams of associate editors and copy-editors, including the Associate Editors for 2025-27: 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) and our newly appointed team for 2026-28, led by Hao Tran (UQ), with Xiaoxiao Kong (UniMelb), Dan Zhou (Monash), and Shengkai Yin (Federation & Monash). Many thanks as well to Dr Sue Ollerhead, Associate Professor Julie Choi, and Dr Shashi Nallaya, who completed their term as Associate Editors at the end of 2025, and to our copy editors whose work behind the scenes is so vital.

An important initiative this year was the establishment of an ACTA Publications Working Party, chaired by the ACTA President or their nominee and consisting of representatives of the ACTA Council and the TiC Editorial Board, which has provided greater support and accountability for the journal. Another important initiative, the move to three issues of the journal a year, with a guest-edited special theme-based issue each year, is also lifting the quality and quantity of contributions. The 2026 Special Issue of *TESOL in Context* is entitled "AI in English Language Learning and Teaching in the Australian Context", guest-edited by Nhung Nguyen (Monash College), Rod Neilsen (Deakin University), and Yingmei Luo (Deakin University) and is still open for submissions, see [CALL FOR PAPERS - TESOL in Context 2026 Special Issue on AI in English Language Learning & Teaching in the Australian Context](#).

We are also committed to highlighting key policy and background papers published in TiC over the last few decades on the ACTA website as an alternative to the launching of background papers. This work will be completed shortly.

#### **5. Publicity and dissemination**

Our Consultancy Support officer Susanne Stanyer finished up her formal paid role in 2025 but has continued to work with me in a voluntary capacity helping maintain and improve our website, see [tesol.org.au](http://tesol.org.au), and consolidating and strengthening our communications, especially given the major role the website is playing in promoting the ACTA conference - many thanks Susanne ! To further enhance dissemination of news we are changing over from Mailchimp to Octopus as our free software system for newsletters as it allows for a much larger distribution network. Ronan has kindly taken over responsibility for our other social media, in particular Linked-in. We have unsubscribed from 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 new avenue yet 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

In terms of finances, as can be seen from the paid membership of our member organizations in the table below, our revenue from capitation has improved slightly in almost all states (and doubled in NSW) which is pleasing. As a result of this, plus careful financial management and very restrained spending, we should be able to move out of a deficit budget this year, with forecast revenue including interest to exceed expenses.

Member Association	2023	2024	2025
WATESOL	151	162	194
ATESOL NT	77	45	68
SATESOL	23	47	25
QATESOL	226	252	256
ATESOL ACT	52	44	48
ATESOL NSW	101	77	151
TasTESOL	50	51	54
Total	680	678	796

In terms of internal governance and organisation, the ACTA Constitution and Protocols Working Party, with the addition of Ronan Kelly, met a number of times earlier in the year to bring suggested improvements to our Constitution to the Council and member associations for discussion and will meet again this year to identify further areas for improvement as well as a consolidated list of working rules or protocols, with a plan to present these consolidated changes formally to the 2027 AGM for ratification.

In terms of internal communications many thanks to Ronan Kelly who co-hosted an informal chat with new ACTA council members from WA and Tasmania to help enhance our succession planning and mentorship of new Council members., QATESOL also invited me to speak at their AGM in March 2025 on the state of EALD in Australia, which was very useful to enhance connections with member organisations.

## 7. Final acknowledgments and thanks

I would like to conclude by thanking the ACTA Council for all its support over the past year, in particular the current members of the executive Secretary Marg Turnbull, VP Ronan Kelly and our wonderful Treasurer Sophie Arkoudis who is stepping down after several years in the role. I would like to farewell our outgoing ACTA Councillors, in particular Helen Moore who is thankfully continuing her ground-breaking work with the Adult and IEALD CGs, and will continue as a defacto member at large of the ACTA Council. I would also like to welcome our new Councillors from ATESOL NT Luke Carter and ATESOL ACT Noah Dean, as well as all those returning Councillors from our other member associations.

I look forward to another productive year ahead!

Chris Davison  
ACTA President

19 March 2026

## Appendix: ACTA Workplan 2024-26

Note priorities not in any specific order, those in **red** not yet commenced and /or modified

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	Maintain 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, eg. 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	Enhance internal and external communications, e.g., regular updates to member	Explore the development of other non-monetary awards, e.g., Lifetime Achievement	

	improve website	associations, weekly newsletters	Award? Professional 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