



ATESOL ACT
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
National Museum of Australia
25th March 2021
4 – 5 pm
PRESIDENT'S REPORT

It gives me great pleasure to present my first report to you as President of ATESOL ACT.

The past year and a bit has been a horror stretch for many people. Despite this, it's been a good year for our Association.

The most significant reason for our success this year is your fabulous ATESOL ACT Committee. They are committed, hard-working, generous women, who have plenty of other commitments but who've never failed to come up to the mark – in fact, go beyond it – in anything they've undertaken to do. So, on behalf of all our members, I want to acknowledge and thank our 2020 Committee.

As we've just witnessed in the General Meeting's overwhelming endorsement of the motion to appoint Jennifer Mayers and Lesley Cioccarelli as ATESOL ACT Honorary Life Members, special thanks must go to both for their incredibly long service to both our association and our peak national body, the Australian Council of TESOL Associations. For a summary of their achievements and contributions, please go to [Awards, Prizes, etc. – ATESOL ACT](#)

A key development that has underpinned our success has been our Working Parties. This development was initiated by your previous President, Bronwyn Singh. Under her presidency, five groups were created to focus on specific tasks and responsibilities: **School-based Learners, Adult Learners, Communications, Membership** and **Mentoring**. A number of Committee members contributed to more than one Working Party.

The remainder of most of this report will focus on the Working Parties' achievements.

The Schools and Adult Working Parties were convened by Janica Morella and myself respectively. Together with other Committee members, these WPs did some important backstage work in developing an events planning template that ensures all bases are covered and people are kept in the loop.

Individuals in consultation with and support from these two WPs organised some inspirational Professional Learning Events, as follows:

- Teaching Remotely On-line (9th May)
- Share Your Best Lesson (15th August)
- Dictionary of Australian Culture with Dr Lauren Sadow (29th August)
- the Refugee Experience (jointly with ACTA and the Refugee Council of Australia; 28th October)
- two national forums (jointly with ACTA and VicTESOL) on the Adult Migrant English Program with Alison Larkins, the Director General of Migrant Services (11th November & 10th March, 2021)
- Exploring the Many Voices of Australia through Literature – Resources from the National Centre for Australian Children’s Literature with Rowan Simkin (18th February, 2021).

In addition, our 2020 AGM was held on 19th March in conjunction with a fabulous virtual tour of the National Portrait Gallery. This year it’s at the National Museum of Australia.

All events except the February 2021 one were held remotely as either Zoom meetings or webinars. Remote participation proved popular, although I suspect people are now looking for at least some face-to-face events. Remote delivery is, of course, cheaper for both participants and the Association, because we don’t have to pay for a venue and refreshments. These cost savings partly explain our healthy bank balance shown in Jennifer’s elegant Treasurer’s Report (next item). We will continue to explore both modes of participation as appropriate to the topic and how people feel.

Registrations for these events were as follows.

EVENT	NO.
Introducing the National Portrait Gallery	29
Teaching Remotely On-line	84
Share Your Best Lesson	47
Dictionary of Australian Culture	92
The Refugee Experience	495
English for Adult Migrants – Future Directions	500 (max. reached with waiting list)
Listening to AMEP Teachers	100 (max. reached with waiting list)
Exploring the Many Voices of Australia Through Literature	35
Introducing the National Museum of Australia	21

The high numbers for the three joint events (the Refugee Experience and the two AMEP events) are explained by them being offered nationally in conjunction with ACTA and VicTESOL. Our thanks to VicTESOL and especially Carly Minnett for faultless organisational support.

The Dictionary of Australian Culture also attracted excellent attendance. In addition to the stimulating presenter and her topic, we suspect that one reason for the high number is that we

gained TQI accreditation for this event – thank you to Bronwyn for doing this onerous paperwork. The high numbers for the *Teaching Remotely* event reflect our timely response to an acutely felt need. It also demonstrated the impressive array of skills mastered by several of your Committee members who were among the presenters (Mali, Jakki, Bianca and Lesley).

The overwhelming response to all these events has been very positive. So I think we can conclude that the School and Adult Working Parties have done an excellent job. I'm hoping we can include evaluation results on our website.

The Schools Working Party also initiated a discussion with the Board of Senior Secondary Studies (BSSS) regarding the draft English Framework for Years 11 and 12. Notes from a meeting between BSSS and ATESOL ACT representatives on 4th May are on the ATESOL ACT website: [ADVOCACY – ATESOL ACT](#). It emerged that although the BSSS consults with schools through the school system itself, it does not consider there is any need to consult with professional associations (not just ATESOL ACT) regarding their particular subject areas. Personally, I find this quite extraordinary. It is also unfortunate in creating unnecessary antagonism rather than harnessing the widest possible range of interests, expertise and experience in pursuit of common goals. It certainly does not match the practice in some other States, for example Victoria and NSW, where VicTESOL and ATESOL NSW are routinely involved in relevant curriculum development projects. I believe there is advocacy to be done in this space but it will take time, energy and resources that will further stretch your Association's limited woman-power (!).

The other three WPs did excellent and very necessary work in going back to basics and thinking out the key issues about how we should move ahead. This work has provided a good basis for determining ATESOL ACT's priorities for 2021.

The Communications WP was led by Lesley and supported her as our indefatigable website editor and in managing Facebook page and social media. Unfortunately, newsletter production fell in a bit of a hole after the middle of the year when various events overtook some members of the group and a key member, Bianca Mister Colmenares, moved to Queensland. We miss Bianca as a highly efficient and thoughtful contributor to the work of your Committee – thank you, Bianca, and best of luck for your future!

I'm delighted to report that a new Committee nominee, Barbara Rogstad, has offered to step into Lesley's very large shoes and another new nominee, Tania Hadlow, has offered to manage social media. The move to two people in this space shows how big Lesley's role has been!

The WP agreed that a task for this year will be looking carefully at the website and rethinking the kind of information it holds, and how it connects with the ACTA website in regard to commonly asked questions, e.g. how do I get a job as an EAL/D teacher? why should mother tongue learning be supported?

Newsletter preparation has yet to be resolved.

The Membership WP was led by Sarah Warren. Jennifer Mayers has made a major contribution in preparing a thoughtful and comprehensive analysis of what our Association

aims to achieve and how this relates to our current and prospective membership. This work has been carried forward to ACTA and will result, we hope, in a national ACTA forum on membership.

In the current employment climate, and especially the decline in appointment of qualified EAL/D teachers, we really do need to think through the role of our Association. At the time when this report was presented to the full Committee on 25th July, our membership profile was as follows in columns 2 and 3 of Table 1 below. I've added the data current for this AGM in column 3 (coloured gold).

Table 1: ATESOL ACT Membership Categories

Membership Type from Trybooking Data	2019	2020 at 23 July	2021 at 24 March
Full	24	36	29
<i>Honorary*</i>	2	2	2
Institutional	3	6 (1 not TB)	10
Part Time	11	21	27
<i>Student*</i>	33	25	29
Unwaged	6	2	5
Total	79	92	103

* *membership fee waived.*

In 2020, we followed a clear policy of registration for events being either free or very low cost for members, while for non-members the fee was high enough to incentivise people to take out membership. The data shows clearly that membership numbers relate primarily to the Professional Learning opportunities we offer. That is, our membership increases with every event we offer. It is therefore worth our while to examine the evaluations of events with some care.

The sectors that members identified as their primary focus were as follows in 2019 and 2020

Table 2: Members according to sector focus (2019 & 2020)

Membership Sector from Trybooking (TB) Data	2019	2020 – at 23 July
Adult	20	24
Primary	35	38
Secondary	8	13
Tertiary (* includes students)	16	17

As a result of the paper and the data in Table 2, the Membership WP set themselves specific directions and priorities, as follows.

1. Maintain the following:

- reduced Early Bird membership to be promoted November – January through newsletter, social media and staged reminders
- targeted professional learning – reflecting the needs of all sectors
- events organised in plenty of time to advertise well in advance

- free or minimal cost for members for events, while non-members pay full price (or take out membership).

2. New Initiative:

Committee to plan first term events for the following year in third term of the current year to allow for advertising to members and to encourage others to join.

3. Priorities for 2020-2021:

- target Institutional Membership in the school sector - Public, Catholic and Independent.
- develop a Membership Kit
- **Student Membership** – be ready for Student Information Sessions at Universities, including Membership Kits and people to do presentation if required.
- **New membership incentive** – the first 5 individually registered full ATESOL members to recruit two new individual memberships to have their own membership fee refunded.

Items 1 and 2 were carried out and have proved successful, as our membership numbers indicate. Our February Professional Learning event got off to a good start. In regard to item 3, with Colleen’s help in getting data on Catholic schools, Sarah and I emailed *all* ACT school principals by name towards the end of last year and invited them to take out institutional membership – that yielded an increase of 8 from this time last year (total 12). The plan is to re-use that mailing list to inform principals of upcoming PD and maybe our newsletters.

So far, we have failed to attract post-primary schools to take out institutional membership.

Work is proceeding on developing a membership kit to be used at the ACU Expo on 13th April and hopefully later with UC.

Our new membership incentive (recruit two new members and have your registration fee refunded) appears to have been a fizzer. Two existing members recruited one new member each (thank you!) but did not manage to entice the required two. So, as far as I know, this offer is still open!!

The data we collected from membership applications/renewals for this year had a slightly different breakdown as follows.

Table 3: Members according to sector focus (2021)

Membership Sector from Trybooking (TB) Data 2021 at 24 March	
Adult migrant/community	10
ELICOS	2
Univ./TAFE study skills support	3
Primary	42
Secondary	8
Teacher education	8 + 4 students
Other	11

These data show that the Association appeared more attractive to Primary teachers in 2020 than any other group. Clearly, our ELICOS teacher numbers are much too low, possibly as a result of the current situation in that sector. But we also need to give attention to teachers in other post-primary settings.

The Mentorship WP also did some back-to-basics thinking. They agreed to implement a buddy system, which we advertised when people signed up as members for 2021. So far 19 people have said they would like this and another 29 have said they are interested. So this WP has a clear focus which will come to fruition this year.

Finally, I want to say something about **ACTA, our national peak Council**. We pay ACTA a capitation fee based on our membership numbers in December of each year. ACTA undertakes four main activities: (1) a biennial conference, (2) the journal *TESOL in Context*, (3) the website, and (4) advocacy. The Council meets four times a year and plays a key role in keeping State/Territory TESOL associations in touch with each other.

The ACTA conference: this was deferred last year and will go ahead this year in Brisbane from 28-30 September. Spring is a great time to visit Brisbane. The conference is a wonderful way to meet up with colleagues from around Australia. Your Committee has agreed to fund registrations for members on a priority basis (this year about \$800). Top of the list for support are those who have an abstract for a paper accepted. So get your thinking caps on and put in an abstract proposal to the conference. Various Committee duties also attract support. For conference details, go to: [2021 ACTA International Conference - Pushing The Boundaries \(actaconference.com\)](http://actaconference.com)

TESOL in Context is the peer-reviewed ACTA publication for teachers, researchers and others interested in TESOL within Australia and internationally. Normally two issues are produced each year. The journal is produced online and is open access. Following Vol 26, No. 1, hard copies are longer produced. The move to open access is part of an initiative to make the journal more easily accessible by readers and members. An issue on Indigenous education is due out shortly. The Journal site is at <http://tesolincontext.org.au/>

The ACTA website: in addition to our own website, Lesley has managed the ACTA website for many years. She is also stepping down from that. She leaves the website in great shape and has a good relationship with the website provider, Swish. If any Association member (on the Committee or otherwise) would be interested to take on this role, Lesley is happy to assist him/her.

One of the best developments for 2020 was that all member associations can post notices about their Professional Learning events on that website. You can now sign up to be notified of these events around the country. Many events are on-line, many are free or very cheap for members, many are really excellent (e.g. from VicTESOL). To sign up, go to [News | Australian Council of TESOL Associations](#) and scroll down to the **Subscribe** box.

Advocacy: Governments (both local and Commonwealth) are not interested in hearing from local associations. The most effective way to communicate with them is through a national body. ACTA works tirelessly in both the schools and adult spaces. We have certainly had a major break-through in regard to adult migrants and extending their eligibility for English

classes through the AMEP. Our local ATESOL ACT WP has given me a lot of support in providing feedback on the ACTA submissions I have drafted.

ACTA also has Working Groups. Mali is a member of the ACTA Schools Working Group. If you're on our Committee or are an ATESOL ACT member, you can be seconded to an ACTA Working Party. Please see me or write to me if you're interested: president@atesolact.org.au

There's a lot more I could say and a lot more we could and should discuss. Some of these issues will be discussed in more depth at the meeting of our new Committee this coming Saturday March 28th.

Finally, thank you all for the work and support you've done this past year. I look forward to seeing everyone again (and more!) at our next Professional Learning event.

Helen Moore, AM, PhD
President
ATESOL ACT
