

Annual Report

2013 - 2014

QUALITY ASSURANCE
IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE
TEACHING



NEAS

ANNUAL REPORT

2013-2014

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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Throughout the 2014 financial year, the NEAS team have been diligently putting into action the plans and strategies that have been carefully laid since early 2013.

After extensive consultation and communication with stakeholders, members, students and peak bodies, a number of key achievements can be reported to confirm that NEAS' transition is maturing and picking up momentum.

Pilot quality assurance assessments involving leading ELT centres country-wide have been completed. Included in this special group were

- ICTE-UQ,
- English Language Company,
- Sydney University CET,
- Kaplan English,
- Navitas and Western Australia Polytechnic, and
- Navitas and Central Institute of Technology.

Best practice findings from these groups were reviewed and entered into the revised quality assurance assessment process.

This model has been attracting the interest and attention of local and overseas quality assurance and accreditation agencies alike, with its output-oriented and collaborative approach.

Key to the new QA structure is the engagement of teachers, students, admin and marketing staff members, in defining quality and confirming alumni outcomes and the capability of centre operations. At the time of writing, NEAS' quality assurance methods have now been defined, with 25% of the NEAS membership engaged in the QA process, utilising stakeholder feedback to define and confirm quality English language teaching and learning operations. It is planned that the balance will be engaged by the end of calendar year 2015.

In anticipation of this quantum shift, support services in the form of NEAS Assist and the Quality Learning Series have been launched to help providers achieve the best possible result in their Quality Endorsement journey.

Over the past year, the Quality Learning Series has delivered over thirty workshops nationally, in areas associated with Learning and Assessment, Curriculum Development, Meeting Compliance Obligations and Linking Quality Assurance to Strategy. Over 500 people have attended these workshops, which have been provided at no charge to members. The objective is to broaden the profile of topics covered in these workshops, and to encourage further industry

involvement by supporting the sharing of ideas and innovations on this platform.

NEAS' marketing efforts have gathered pace in 2014, with our in-house database sending 2,500 newsletters a fortnight to teachers, ELT centre management, government agencies and regulators. The *NEAS News* exists to keep members and interested stakeholders informed of the efforts being made by the sector to self-regulate quality and achieve positive outcomes for learners.

Just as importantly, this forum provides a natural platform to support achievements of high quality organisations and to help showcase them to new and existing markets. In support of this, NEAS also communicates to over 4,500 agents each month, through *NEAS News* and other missives, designed to inform and attract the gaze of referring agents. This marketing initiative has helped to rebuild the NEAS quality brand and communicate the quality investment made by NEAS-endorsed providers in pursuit of a commercial outcome.

Our communications strategy has necessarily become more sophisticated in order to maintain the interest of the younger, aspirational audience who use our members' services. NEAS has embraced social media as *NEAS News'* parallel organ, ensuring we are connecting with students via their preferred channels. The image that we are presenting through medium is fresh and modern, and designed to attract and retain the interest of "*thoughtfully dynamic stakeholders*". In so doing, NEAS seeks to reflect that positive energy through to our membership.

The mission to engage and inform agents on the value of the NEAS brand has required an active marketing presence at major agent fairs. At the time of drafting NEAS is well underway with the growth of the brand through these events, and will continue to maintain a positive presence, with the intention of informing agents and brokering referral and introductions for NEAS members to agents. NEAS plans for growth overseas will support our member providers locally, by building the brand and enhancing its recognition as a mark of quality amongst agents.

On the global front, NEAS added a number of new centres to the membership, with twenty five providers now located offshore. Partly fostered through NEAS' marketing efforts through Asia Pacific Quality Network, we have added Singapore to our list of attendant nations, and will shortly approve our first China-based centre. Other "blue sky" initiatives include a major licencing arrangement for a group of Chinese and Vietnamese based ELT centres, as well as new interest from providers in the Middle East, Pakistan and India.

In May 2014 NEAS launched its new brand, coinciding with the NEAS Management Conference held at the Pier One on Sydney Harbour. This was the ideal occasion to present the new NEAS “Tick and Globe”, communicating the fact that NEAS was moving confidently forward with a vision of growth and a commitment to Quality Assurance.

Day one of the conference was opened by the Parliamentary Secretary for Education Senator Scott Ryan, who shared his views on the government’s deregulation agenda for education. The second day was opened by Ms Karen Andrews who revealed elements of reforms being proposed by the Department of Industry in the management of vocational education. Many more changes have since become part of the accepted industrial landscape.

With strong sponsorship and industry support, over 240 people attended the event and the overall feedback was very positive. Conference goers commented on the quality of the presenters and venue. The evening function was a hit, with Wendy Harmer successfully reducing everyone to tears of laughter over a three-course meal, all the while bathed in the evening glow of the Harbour Bridge.

One area of growth for NEAS has been in its relationship with the NSW Board of Studies and the QLD Government Department of Education and Training and Employment. In each of these states, NEAS’ original accreditation requirements still have a role for many high schools who enrol young people to undertake ELICOS programmes. These partnerships demonstrate that NEAS’ Accreditation system provides a respected basis to organisations, and where a strong foundation of sound practice is required to protect the interests of young students.

On other projects, our AMEP Quality Assurance contract with the Department of Immigration and Border Protection transitioned to the Department of Industry in one of the many machinery of Government changes which took place in Canberra this year. We are pleased to share that Industry have taken the AMEP under its wing with all due care and consideration for the needs of the 47,000 migrants that it supports each year in their quest to learn the local lingua franca.

June 2014 marked the end of the three year contract for NEAS’ role in undertaking monitoring on behalf of Industry for the AMEP. After fruitful discussions with the Department of Industry and the Commonwealth Government, we are pleased to share that NEAS has been contracted for a further three years, to continue to support the AMEP sector in its goal to continuously improve outcomes for migrant language learners.

Some related successes in 2014 include the complete rebuild and rewrite of the Assessment Task Bank, including the re-recording and redrafting of the online activities under the supervision of Ana Bratkovic. The ATB currently supports over 2,500 registered users

and maintains over 440 assessment tasks that were downloaded 125,000 times in the 2014 financial year!

We are pleased to report that NEAS has retained a strong membership base, and we thank our providers for working with us for their ongoing loyalty. What has become most evident is that our providers understand that many other global jurisdictions support both accreditation and quality assurance agencies, with each having its unique focus.

This is very much the case in Australia and our efforts working with both ASQA and TEQSA have produced positive results for providers, with the effect of reducing red-tape to allow providers to do what they do best; providing a quality English language learning experience. This is further supported by NEAS’ efforts to link with our Quality Assurance colleagues in related jurisdictions, connecting best practice principles from abroad and bringing them to the attention of our local regulators.

On a commercial front, the market with ELICOS providers in Australia appears to be entering another “purple patch”. The reasons for this are many and varied, but are typical of the variant nature of referral activity in our sector. Price-based competition continues to plague certain parts of the sector, notwithstanding enrolment levels being strong. The research supports a continued investment in quality as being a tried and true method of overcoming commoditisation. The most sustainable providers will be re-building their business models now, in anticipation of future market turmoil.

NEAS continues to enjoy the support of many industry associations including IEAA, UECA, TAFE Directors Australia, English Australia and ACPET. We thank them for their commitment to supporting quality assurance in the English language teaching sector.

We are also blessed with a capable, energetic and effective Board of Directors, with the vision and enquiry to challenge and confront the difficult tasks. Now ably supported by a new inaugurated Advisory Council, NEAS has never been better positioned to deliver good governance to its members.

In 2014, NEAS was saddened to lose two long standing board members, We would like to acknowledge both Robin Simpson’s and Bianca Panizza’s contributions to NEAS during their time on the Board. Their efforts were tireless and their contributions considered and professional in judgement; and always in the best interest of NEAS. Whilst missed from the bi-monthly board meetings, Bianca remains involved on the NEAS Advisory Council, whilst Robin is an early adoptee of NEAS Quality Endorsement.

Joining the Board in 2014, NEAS welcomed Heidi Reid of AICE and Adam Kilburn of Sydney College of English as member elected Directors, after two hotly contested elections with nine candidates in all running. We would like to extend our thanks to the industry for its investment and interest in NEAS affairs at the strategic level also.



The 2014 financial year concluded with a restructure at NEAS, whereby the team were redeployed to new roles that would continue to test their appetite for change. We are delighted to share that everyone accepted their new positions and have embraced the new strategic plan. The Board and Management of NEAS would like to extend their thanks to the NEAS team, for ensuring that the new strategic plan could be implemented successfully.

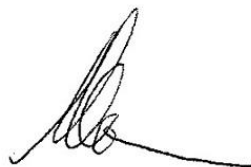


Finally but most of all, we thank our dedicated quality providers for their continuing support of NEAS' role in assuring quality in international education, and for engaging with us to advise on matters associated with improvements to processes and developments of interest.

As NEAS commences its 25th year in operation, the combined fortunes of NEAS and the English Language teaching sector are looking favourable, and we look forward to sharing the next quarter century with a strong industry and a positive outlook.



Denise Taylor
Chair



Mark Raven
Chief Executive

PEOPLE AT NEAS

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Ms Denise Taylor

Chair
appointed June 2012,
Director
appointed February 2012

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

Dip Company Directors
Course



Mr Larry Davies

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

BCom, MCom
Principal, Australian
International College of
English



Mr Adam Kilburn

Director
appointed July 2014

BA, Grad Dip TESOL, MA,
MBA

Director, Sydney College of
English

EXECUTIVE STAFF



Mr Mark Raven

Chief Executive



Ms Ana Bratkovic

General Manager



Ms Marion Bagot

Special Projects,
Coordinator



Mr Stefan Boffa

Government Liaison
Coordinator



Ms Suzannah Clerc

Quality Assurance &
Marketing Coordinator



Ms Jan Collins

Quality Assessor



Ms Diane Price

Quality Assessor



Ms Jenny Batten

Marketing and
Administration Officer



Ms Kittie Papp

Book-keeper

NEAS QUALITY ASSESSORS

NEAS acknowledges the professional and excellent work undertaken by the NEAS Quality Assessors. The trained team of Assessors is integral to NEAS accreditation and their on-site assessments and associated reports help maintain the quality of the sector overall.

New South Wales

Janet Conroy
Denver Craig
Louise FitzGerald
Janet Halliday
Sharon Luhr
Carolyn Matthews
Paul Mattingly
Glenys Merrifield
Pamela Riley
Noreen Whittaker

Queensland

Pamela Beaumont
Margaret Casey
Del Childs
Ronda Dove
Deborah Kemish
Cath Moore
Jill Schiffmann
Sue Woods

Victoria

Harvey Broadstock
Sue Casey
Lesley Crommelin
Carol Gibson
Jane Hayman
Shirley Martin

Western Australia

Helen Carroll
Toni Dobinson
Christabel Lee
Paul Mercia

HIGHLIGHTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

1. NEAS QUALITY ASSURANCE

FRAMEWORK

The NEAS Quality Assurance Framework is the result of a project undertaken in 2012-2013 with a view to repositioning NEAS as a quality assurance body with a strong focus on quality assurance and on supporting ELT Centres in continuous quality improvement.

The Framework comprises five key Quality Areas:

- A. Teaching, Learning and Assessment
- B. The Student Experience
- C. Resources and Facilities
- D. Administration, Management and Staffing
- E. Promotion and Student Recruitment

Within each Quality Area there are 4-6 Quality Principles, each elaborated in up to six Quality Drivers.

The QA Framework was completed at the end of 2013, and introduced to NEAS members through a series of national seminars. The implementation phase commenced early in 2014, with six member centres being selected to participate in piloting a Quality Endorsement process involving stakeholder surveys and focus groups grounded in the QA Framework. Following the pilot, the Quality Endorsement process was introduced to members at the 2014 NEAS Conference.

The QA Framework and supporting documents, including the *Quality Practice Guide* and *Plain Guide to Quality Endorsement* are available to members on the NEAS website.



2. ADULT MIGRANT ENGLISH PROGRAM (AMEP)

NEAS undertook quality monitoring of AMEP providers throughout 2013-14, with a total of 73 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 Industry following the machinery of government changes resulting from the 2013 federal election. NEAS representatives met with the Department on three occasions throughout the reporting period to discuss NEAS's role in ELT quality assurance, developments in the Assessment Task Bank (ATB) and future possibilities for the AMEP.

NEAS continued its management of the ATB, which at 30 June 2014 had 2289 authorised users. NEAS facilitated the National Working Group, representing all providers nationally, and the Validation Panel, which met 8 times throughout the year to review ATB tasks. NEAS also undertook an alignment of all tasks to the 2013 CSWE framework following reaccreditation by ASQA of the CSWE certificates and uploaded 46 newly validated tasks to the ATB web portal – a total of 446 tasks across all CSWE levels comprised the ATB at 30 June 2014.



Further support to the AMEP was provided in the form of Professional Development Kits, created to assist users, teachers and NWG representatives in improving their knowledge and skills in assessment. ATB users also participated in NEAS' *Quality Learning Series*, including sessions on *Developing and Revising Curriculum* and *Validation and Moderation*.

3. ELT MANAGEMENT CONFERENCE

Pier One Sydney Harbour created the perfect backdrop for the 2014 NEAS Management Conference, providing over 200 delegates with an opportunity to share a renewed optimism in our sector, whilst remaining committed to the people that we are in business to assist, our students.



Highlights from the conference were:

NEAS MARKETING LAUNCH – launch of the global NEAS marketing campaign. The video showcasing the very best of what ELT in Australia has to offer is now being distributed to our 4,500 agents around the world. The video will also provide the foundation for our marketing message at this year's Alpha Conference in London, where NEAS members will be represented for the first time.



SENATORIAL AND MINISTERIAL SUPPORT - day one was opened by the Hon. Senator Scott Ryan, Parliamentary Secretary for Education, and day two opened by Mrs Karen Andrews MP, Head of the Department of Industry's VET reform committee, the 2014 NEAS conference could not hope for a more heartening confirmation of this government's commitment to Quality.



PLENARY SPEAKERS - as usual, our plenary speakers weren't devoid of controversy, providing us with the perfect dinner table conversations in between Wendy Harmer's acerbic perspectives on life! From Postcards in Vietnam to the Disruption of New Technologies, we experienced a roller coaster ride that celebrated the diversity of our industry and the rich tapestry of opinions and views that it represents.



SESSIONAL PRESENTERS - this year's sessional presenters posed a real problem for conference goers, as many found it hard to decide which session to attend. All presenters were warmly regarded by the majority of conference goers; however special mention must be made of those sessions that achieved a 100% feedback rating of Very Good to Excellent from attendees.

NEAS was proud to present certificates to the first five centres to receive Quality Endorsement prior to the conference:

- Central Institute of TAFE (WA)
- Centre for English Teaching, The University of Sydney (NSW)
- English Language Company (NSW)
- Kaplan International English (VIC)
- Polytechnic West (WA)

4. LAUNCH OF NEAS' QUALITY SERVICES

NEAS implemented the following new services:

NEAS ASSIST - a program set up to provide support to its members in every area of ELICOS/ELT. Since its commencement in November 2013, NEAS Assist has delivered contracts in a benchmarking research project in the marketing area, an academic management mentoring program and development of an EAP course.

NEAS PREMIUM PRODUCT ENDORSEMENT - a programme to assist in the communication of “*what makes you famous*”.

The NEAS Premium Endorsed Product logo may be earned by applying to have products scrutinised by the NEAS peer review process. After being tested and analysed, providers may be required to test new products for a period in order to confirm success in the marketplace. User feedback and results will be a significant contributor to receiving NEAS Premium Product endorsement.

The Institute of Continuing & TESOL Education, The University of Queensland were NEAS’ first Premium Product Endorsement for their International Diploma in Language Teaching Management (IDLTM) program.



QUALITY LEARNING SERIES - a series of workshops and seminars delivered around Australia to assist education professionals in their efforts to balance regulation with creativity. Session topics include:

- CRICOS Audit Preparation
- Curriculum Development
- How to Rollout Quality Endorsement at your Centre
- Quality Culture – A Steve Jobs Case Study
- Validation and Moderation.

5. GOVERNMENT (ASQA, TEQSA, BOARD OF STUDIES)

In January 2014 ASQA reconfirmed its commitment to contract NEAS as a “specialist provider” of audit services for CRICOS and ELICOS purposes, as well as for auditing those providers for compliance against ESOS and the National Code.

Since May 2014, ASQA TEQSA and NEAS have been in discussions to identify methods that will assist providers in the reduction of red-tape. ASQA and TEQSA have both noted that NEAS’ new Quality Endorsement model with its output based approach, provides a new avenue to explore collaborative

opportunities around information sharing and best practice in English language teaching delivery.

One area of growth for NEAS has been in its relationship with the NSW Board of Studies and the QLD Government Department of Education and Training and Employment. In each of these states, NEAS’ original accreditation requirements still have a role for many high schools who enrol young people to undertake ELICOS programmes. These partnerships demonstrate that NEAS’ accreditation system provides a respected basis to organisations, and where a strong foundation of sound practice is required to protect the interests of young students.

Discussions with all regulatory bodies will continue into the year ahead.

6. NEAS INTERNATIONAL

There 25 ELT centres accredited internationally by NEAS; with one new provider in Singapore and one additional centre of an existing provider in Vietnam being accredited in the last financial year. Five site visits were carried out in total, including one visit in Singapore; three visits in Vietnam; and one visit in Cambodia. Accredited centres are located in Indonesia, Vietnam, Cambodia, Singapore and the Middle East. Further accreditation activity is taking place in Vietnam, Singapore and China. As in the previous reporting period, there continues to be much interest in NEAS International accreditation, with most activity centred in the ASEAN region.

To be accredited by NEAS internationally, providers must demonstrate that they meet the NEAS standards in all respects and undergo a rigorous accreditation process, which includes a desk audit and on-site assessment. Applicants generally need a period of preparation time to meet NEAS standards, particularly in the areas of teaching qualifications and class sizes. NEAS counsels and supports providers throughout this period to ensure they understand the standards they must meet. In developing its International Growth Strategy, which commenced in 2011, NEAS is in communication with Austrade to enhance its contact with governments and businesses in a number of countries in the ASEAN region and beyond.



NEAS activity internationally has centred on brand recognition, delivery of professional development, and support and guidance to new and existing members internationally through the delivery of quality assurance services. One step to raising the profile of NEAS internationally has been the instigation of a communications campaign targeting agents. NEAS now communicates with over 5,000 agent networks across 118 countries worldwide.

7. CAMTESOL CONFERENCE

The “Roadmap for an ASEAN Community 2009-2015” emphasises the need for mobility, which includes “promoting and investing in education and lifelong learning” and promoting “the use of English language”.

The CamTESOL conference is the premier English language education event in the ASEAN region. The 10th Annual CamTESOL Conference was held at the Institute of Technology Cambodia (ITC) on 22-23 February 2014, with the theme *English for Regional and International Integration*.

The conference was opened by H. E. Minister Hang Chuon Naron of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS). Registration for the conference totalled 1,754, among whom 647 participants came from around 30 countries specifically for the event. There were 514 provincial teachers at the conference sponsored by various individual and institutional donors.

The conference had a total of 451 presentations including papers, workshops and posters. The three plenary speakers were Dr. Yilin Sun, Prof. Brian Paltridge, and Prof. Barbara Seidlhofer.

NEAS once again sponsored and facilitated the CamTESOL Regional ELT Quality Assurance Forum, which was held at the Cambodiana Hotel on the afternoon of Friday 21 February. It was attended by 74 participants from 13 countries. Most of the attendees were managers and leaders in the ELT field from Southeast and East Asia. This forum has provided a platform for regional and international managers and leaders for the last 7 years to learn and share best practice in ELT leadership, management and quality assurance, and to provide a networking opportunity.

In 2014, NEAS also sponsored two teachers, one from Indonesia and one from Vietnam, to attend the conference to present papers. In addition, NEAS staff sponsored local Cambodian teachers to enable them to attend the conference. The International Accreditation Manager also held meetings with senior managers of NEAS accredited centres and made contact with ELT centres interested in NEAS’ quality assurance processes.



NEAS’ ongoing attendance at and support of the CamTESOL Conference continues to raise NEAS’ profile internationally. The event provides invaluable opportunities for NEAS to showcase its quality assurance work and Australian Education.

8. APQN AND INQAHHE CONFERENCES – HANOI, MARCH 2014

The APQN 2014 Conference and AGM was hosted by Foreign Trade University (FTU), Vietnam in the Crown Plaza West Hanoi on March 7-8, 2014 with the overall theme of *Higher Education Quality Assurance in a Changing World: Envisioning the Future of Asia Pacific*. There were 205 participants from 32 countries/territories within and beyond the Asia-Pacific region, as well as representatives from international organisations, including UNESCO and the European Consortium of Accreditation (ECA).

The welcome was given by the Chair of the Local Organising Committee, Prof. Hoang Van, Chau, President of FTU, Vietnam. Dr. Jagannath Patil, President of APQN from NAAC, India made an address before the opening speech by Dr Pham Xuan Thanh, General Department of Education Testing and Accreditation (GDETA), Ministry of Education and Training (MOET), Vietnam.

Keynote speakers were Dr. Antony Stella, a Commissioner at the Commission for Academic Accreditation (CAA), the federal quality assurance agency of the United Arab Emirates, who spoke on Developmental Areas for the Asia Pacific Quality Network, and Mr. Colin Tück, Director of the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR), whose talk centred on Asia - Europe Dialogue in Higher Education Quality Assurance.

Presentations included four panel discussions, focusing on the topics of Challenges and Opportunities for Asia Pacific: Higher Education QA in a Changing World; Quality Assurance across borders: different models for education/different models for Quality Assurance; Towards QA collaboration and exchange: locally, regionally and globally and

Outcome, Innovation and Development of Quality Assurance.

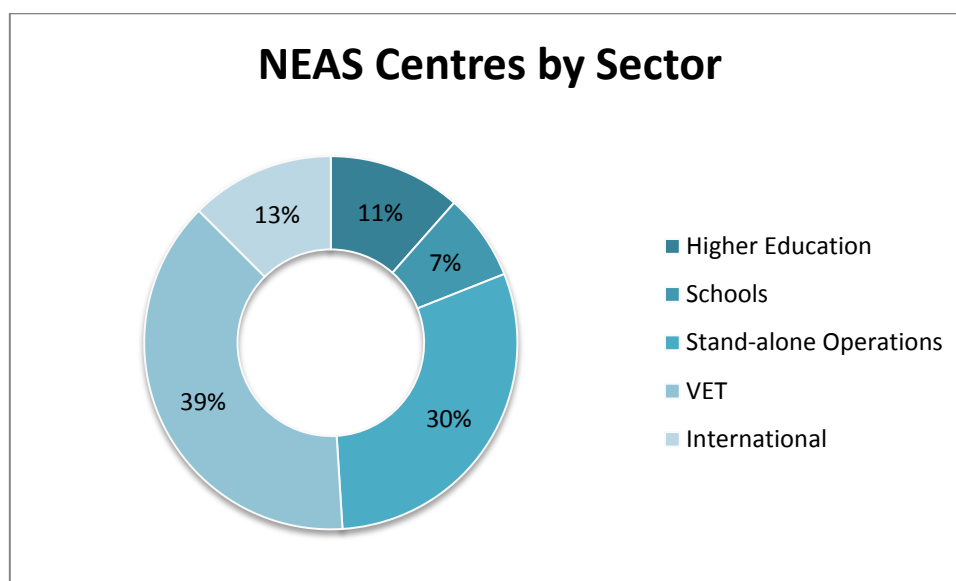
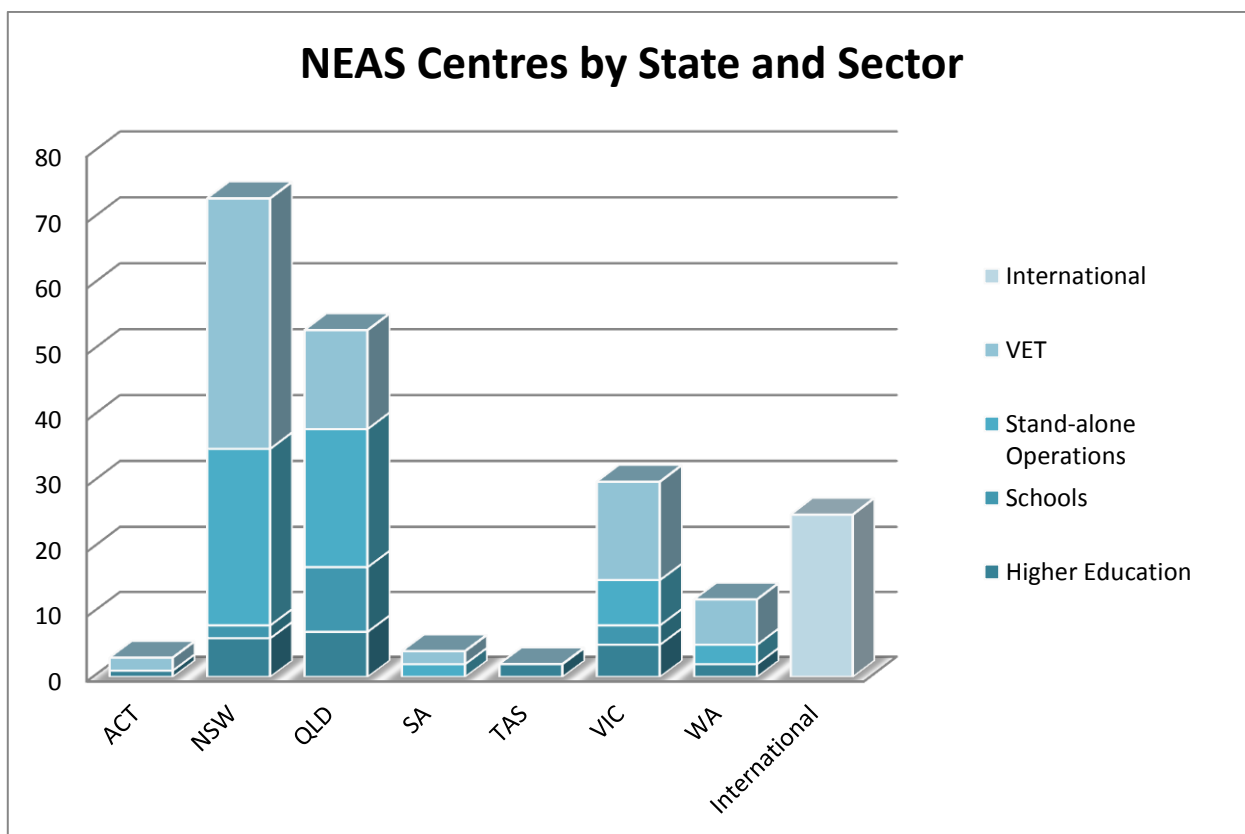
Delegates represented government and non-government agencies at various stages of development. Some were in the process of developing

qualifications frameworks and quality assurance systems, while others had mature systems which were being refined in light of industry developments or stretched to meet demands of government policy.

9. ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

ELT CENTRE SUMMARY

At the end of the 2013-2014 financial year, there were 202 NEAS centres. The year has seen the continued trend of consolidation of operations; NEAS has members from 145 ultimate holding entities.





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