

15 February 2010

Senator Back
Chair, Senate Education, Employment and Workplace Relations Committee
GPO Box 6022
CANBERRA ACT 2600

REF: NVR Bills Referral to the Senate Education, Employment and Workplace Relations Committee

Dear Sir / Madam

In the National Vocational Education and Training Regulator (Consequential Amendments) Bill that has recently been introduced in the Senate, there is a great deal of emphasis on the definition and role of the “relevant designated authority” in relation to ELICOS and Foundation Courses: “to the extent that the provider provides an English Language Intensive Course for Overseas Students, a Foundation program, or both—the entity determined by the Minister by legislative instrument”. The NVR Bills have since been referred to the Senate Education, Employment and Workplace Relations Committee for inquiry and report.

One objective for the committee is further stakeholder consultation. In this context it would seem timely for NEAS (The National ELT Accreditation Scheme) to be consulted as a key stakeholder.

As you are probably aware, NEAS is the national body which accredits English Language Teaching centres across Australia, whether they are stand alone, or in the vocational, university or high school sector. In NSW, VETAB delegates registration of ELT centres to NEAS, whereas in other states centres are generally recommended to gain NEAS accreditation prior to registration on CRICOS.

Quality ELICOS provision is a key factor in the educational pathway of many international students proceeding to higher education. At a time when the number of international students choosing Australia as a study destination is substantially decreasing, quality standards regulated nationally are key to the message Australia sends to the world assuring potential students that our education system stands comparison with our major competitors. NEAS’ quality standards, mirrored in the National ELICOS Standards, are respected worldwide. Leading ELT accrediting bodies such as Accreditation UK and EAQUALS refer to NEAS standards in benchmarking quality assurance processes globally.

Key to the quality of the education experience of international students from arrival to graduation is the level of support provided. The academic pathway through ELICOS, direct entry programs, foundation programs and English Language Proficiency/Academic Literacy support at Tertiary Level are all within NEAS’ quality assurance capacity.

NEAS’ national and international experience in the area of quality assurance, our reputation worldwide as a leading accreditation body and our 20 year track record in working alongside government at a state and federal level in regulatory processes indicate our expertise in monitoring quality. NEAS has the experience and is the accreditation body best equipped to monitor quality assurance and regulate providers of ELICOS, Foundation Programs and English Language Proficiency Standards at Tertiary Level.

I would value a stakeholder discussion and am happy to travel to a location convenient to you for a meeting.

Yours sincerely

Anne Holmes
Executive Director