

QATESOL President's Report

AGM 14 March 2015
Milpera State High School



The 12 months since March 2014 have been very exciting for QATESOL. We've celebrated over 40 years of existence and literally transformed ourselves by creating a new image by bringing our activities online and adopting electronic communication via email. I'm also thrilled to report that our membership numbers have increased by 30% and are being sustained as renewals become due. We currently have 185 financial members.

At our AGM last year we launched our new logo and three weeks later on 9 April, our new website with electronic membership and event registration went live. The same day, from out of the blue, we had a new member join up using PayPal and this has continued regularly throughout the year. To date, as well as having an increase in SEQ and Regional Members, we've had a marked increase in Institutional and Student memberships, thanks to promotion via education networks and by our university colleagues.

Features of our new website include:

- An immediate straightforward membership registration & renewal system that does not require posting registration papers, banking of cheques or cash
- Membership 12 months from date of joining rather than falling due on 31 December, with automatic reminders sent 4 weeks and one week before a Member's due date.
- Electronic registration for professional development events with Members automatically receiving discounts for PD attendance
- Easy access to past Newsletters, PD papers and blogs in the Members' section
- A vibrant public face for QATESOL and our TESOL field with regular news updates on the Home Page and links to ACTA and other information.
- A *Subscribe* facility for people who may not necessarily want to join, but still wish to receive our News Updates. To date, we've had 41 Subscribers sign up, including registrants in Japan, United States, Poland and Germany.

In April we also launched our Member email system using *Createsend.com*. This allows us to send out bulk emails to our members without the need to maintain manual email lists. The big advantage of the system is that these emails are small files for the receiver. We can include images and a great deal of information in the QATESOL Newsletter without clogging up our Members' Inboxes! A disadvantage however, is that some servers treat the emails as spam and we're concerned that not all Members are receiving them. We have currently fallen into a pattern of sending an electronic *QATESOL Newsletter* every 3-4 months and a *QATESOL News* email each month.

All this has made the life of the QATESOL Management Committee and particularly the Treasurer, much easier! It has also meant that we no longer needed to pay for administration assistance. In August, we said farewell to Rosanna Pappalardo and since then, the Management Committee has been carrying out administration tasks.

What have we done to continue and promote QATESOL's role in the past 12 months?

Role 1 Provide professional development opportunities to TESOL, ESL and EAL/D teachers

- July – Our mini-conference and celebration, *Looking Back, Looking Forward: celebrating over 40 years of QATESOL* was held at the State Library of Queensland with 90 past and present members attending.
- September – PD Morning at Milpera SHS - *Teachers and Song*. Presentations included preparing pre-service ESL teachers and songs in the ESL classroom – 47 participants
- Late September - ACTA International Conference in Melbourne. QATESOL assisted with funding for a large contingent of Queensland presenters and participants to attend. Presenters were funded through the Anna Kohler Fund.
- November – Twilight Event at the Catholic Education Office at Dutton Park – 25 participants
- We're currently on track and very excited about our joint regional mini-conference *At the Coalface* in Townsville with QCAL (Queensland Council for Adult Literacy) on 15-16 August this year.

Role 2 Promote the study of teaching English to speakers of other languages qualifications

- QATESOL Colleagues in teaching positions in universities have been very proactive during the past 12 months, including giving a presentation at our PD morning in September. During the year we discussed but have not yet implemented, intentions to work closely together to advocate for the requirement for all EAL/D teachers in Queensland schools to have a TESOL qualification. We have this in the adult sector, but not yet in schools.
- On average we receive 2 to 3 emails per week on our *Contact Us* email address, requesting information about TESOL qualifications and requirements in Queensland and overseas. In February, we added an FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) tab and page to our Home Page.

Roles 3 & 4 Provide leadership on issues relevant to a culturally diverse community Advocate on behalf of our teachers and learners

QATESOL has been very active in our advocacy role within ACTA. Gae Nastasi and I have been the nominated Queensland Councillors for the last three years. During the last 12 months, there has been a very proactive ACTA Executive who has reinstated and refreshed ACTA Working Groups. Gae has actively participated in the Australian EAL/D Standards Working Group and I was involved in the Adult Working Group submission to the Department of Industry's review of the AMEP and SEE Programs. The results of these and other ACTA initiatives are on the ACTA website.

I would like to give my thanks to the current volunteer QATESOL Management Committee. – Gae Nastasi, Therese O'Brien, Hazel Davidson, Penny Koura, Fiona Gura, Vicki Dixon, Jayne Graham, Tina Winterflood and Carola Robson.

No wonder we're all so tired! All this has been achieved on top of our personal workloads and family commitments.

Special thanks go to our efficient and passionate Secretary, Hazel Davidson who is not nominating for the position again today. Over the last three years, Hazel's foresight and

persistence has led to our bi-annual regional conferences run in partnership with QCAL. Hazel is not leaving the Management Committee, and she is very busy organizing the 2015 Regional Conference in Townsville.

Thanks also to the other members of the QATESOL Executive, Vice President Gae Nastasi and our Treasurer for the past 4 years (and counting), Therese O'Brien. It has been wonderful working closely with you for the last three years.

One member of the current Management Committee has indicated that she will not be seeking renomination today. Many thanks to Carola Robson for her wonderful input.

I'd also like to make special mention of the quiet achiever of the QATESOL Management Committee, Fiona Gura. Fiona has served on the committee for 14 years. She keeps coming to meetings every month (new grandchildren permitting) and assisting with PD events and is our own personal rock and font of recent QATESOL history. Thank you Fiona!

Thanks to Carmelina Lanza-Volpe from the Language People for hosting our meetings each month and to Catholic Education and Milpera State High School for allowing us to use their facilities for professional development events at no cost. Thanks also to Mavis, the amazing Milpera Tuckshop Convenor for the feasts that she provides.

Finally, after three years as QATESOL President, I feel it is time to step down and give someone else a turn. Thank you to all who have given me the opportunity to contribute to our field in this way – it's been very satisfying personally and a lot of fun!

Elene Claire
14 March 2015