



28th December 2022

Dear members and friends,

Three weeks ago, the NT Government announced its intent to phase out effective enrolment —the attendance-based school funding methodology which has been used to determine school budgets over the last ten years. ATESOL NT’s committee was very pleased to hear this because since 2021 we have been strongly advocating for a more equitable funding model for NT government schools.

Over the last eighteen months ATESOL NT’s committee has been very busy. This newsletter is therefore quite long, but does provides an overview of our advocacy work and the professional learning events ATESOL NT we have provided from 2021-2022.

Deloitte’s review of effective enrolment

In May 2022, ATESOL NT took part in Deloitte’s review of effective enrolment. During our consultation with Deloitte, we described effective enrolment’s damaging impact on the staffing and resourcing of both remote and urban schools with large cohorts of Indigenous students. We also described how this funding model has led to nine years of plummeting attendance for Indigenous students across the NT.

7th December 2022: NT Government to phase out effective enrolment

On December 7th the NT Government released [Deloitte’s review](#), which recommended that effective enrolment be phased out in 2-5 years. [In a media release](#), the Minister for Education Eva Lawler, stated that the government accepted all of Deloitte’s findings and recommendations and announced the government’s “intent to change the funding methodology to be based on enrolment rather than effective enrolment”.

2021–22: ATESOL NT’s advocacy for enrolment-based school funding and bilingual education

Over the last eighteen months ATESOL NT has been advocating for an enrolment-based funding model and the improved provision and support of bilingual education in NT government schools. Much of ATESOL NT’s advocacy work in 2022 stemmed from the evidence and the [detailed submission](#) we provided to the federal government’s inquiry into adult literacy and its importance in August 2021. Following this, we held meetings in September 2021 to discuss the impact of effective enrolment and the need for bilingual education to be better supported with then NT Education Minister, Lauren Moss and Warren Snowden (former house of reps MP for Lingiari). In April 2022 we also met and discussed these issues with SNAIC, the national peak body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and Senator Malarndirri McCarthy.



ATESOL NT and the Australian Council of TESOL Associations' advocacy

Last September, after our submission to the adult literacy inquiry, the Australian Council of TESOL Associations (ACTA) and ATESOL NT issued [a joint media release](#) about effective enrolment and its impact on school resourcing and attendance in NT schools. Based on this media release, the [Australian Associated Press wrote a story](#). Following this, in October 2021 the NT Government announced its [second review](#) of effective enrolment. Deloitte won the contract for this review which they conducted in March-May of 2022.

March 2022: The Adult Literacy Inquiry *Don't take it as Read* report

In March this year, the federal government's inquiry into adult literacy and its importance, published its report [Don't Take it as Read](#). ATESOL NT and ACTA were pleased to read recommendation 7:

The Committee recommends that, as part of the new National School Reform Agreement, commencing in 2023, the Australian Government seek the agreement of the states and territories to ensure funding for schools is based on student enrolment rather than attendance.

In Canberra work has begun on addressing the recommendations contained in this report and we will keep members informed about any progress/developments in 2023.

October 2021-December 2022: ACTA's consultancy group on English as an additional language or dialect (EAL/D) for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders

In October 2021, the Australian Council of TESOL Associations (ACTA) established a national group for teachers, corporate education staff and academics who have experience and knowledge around the delivery of EAL/D to Indigenous students and adults. This group, which is co-chaired by Helen Moore and Liz Easton, held meetings with ACARA's EAL/D consultant and the Australian Education Research Organisation (AERO). Early in the year, members provided input into ACTA's [National Roadmap for EAL/D](#) and recently the group provided input to ACTA's submissions to the Productivity Commission's [Review of the National School Reform Agreement](#) and [the Closing the Gap agreement](#). Both these submissions and ACTA's National Roadmap for EAL/D feature information and data about remote Indigenous education in the NT.

If you are interested in joining this group, please let ATESOL NT know as we would welcome your participation and input into our future advocacy work for Indigenous students in the NT and around Australia.

2016–2022: Yingiya Guyula's advocacy for NT remote education

ATESOL NT would like to recognize Yingiya Guyula, independent MLA for North-East Arnhem electorate, Mulka, for his advocacy on remote Indigenous education. Since being elected in 2016, Yingiya Guyula has campaigned strongly against effective enrolment, which he describes as 'totally racist'. He has [informed the public about its impact on the schools](#) in his electorate, [asked questions](#) about the NT Government's spending of Commonwealth education money at Estimates and via written questions, and [put forward a motion in the NT parliament](#) this September for the NT



Legislative Assembly to acknowledge that remote education is in ‘crisis’ and that fixing this requires ‘significant redesign through genuine consultation with local communities’.

November 2022: The ABC’s story on effective enrolment

Last month, the ABC published a story by [Sarah Spina-Mathews and Oliver Chaseling](#) based on data Yingiya Guyula obtained via written questions to the Minister for Education. The story revealed that, across thirteen remote Arnhem and designated bilingual community schools, principals were receiving funding for only 40–60% of enrolled students in these schools. The story also included an estimate from the Australian Education Union NT that in 2022, around 7000 NT students were receiving no funding at all—from either the NT or Commonwealth governments.

June 2022: Foundation for Learning and Literacy

The Foundation for Learning and Literacy was initiated by Prof Robyn Ewing of Sydney University in 2021. All teacher professional associations were approached to take part in a series of symposia to support the re-establishment of the role of rich literature in education. In June, [ACTA’s Presentation](#) was presented by ATESOL NT’s ACTA Councillor Fran Murray.

September 2022: ACTA International Conference: [‘Pushing the Boundaries’](#)

ACTA’s national conference was held in Brisbane in September 2022, after a two-year suspension due to Covid. Fran Murray (ACTA Councillor for ATESOL NT) attended the conference and gave a presentation on Closing the Gap, titled [‘How Wide Can This Gap Get?’](#) Downloadable presentations are available on the conference website.

Zooming in from Darwin, Janine Oldfield (ATESOL NT Vice President) presented a paper titled ‘Deadly Policy’. In her presentation Janine outlined how the rise of neoliberalism in the 1980s has seen Indigenous languages orientated as a ‘problem’ and that in remote NT schools, this has led to the denudation of bilingual education and EAL/D programs and in policies such as effective enrolment. All of this contributing to dramatic falls in Indigenous student school attendance, engagement, and retention.

October 2022: LWA’s AMEP Roadshow

In October, ATESOL NT hosted LWA’s AMEP roadshow. In this webinar, LWA provided an overview of the new online AMEP EAL/D teaching resources which will be available next year via the AMEP website. When these free multimodal EAL/D teaching resources come online in 2023, we will send out information to our members.

Provided



January- November 2022: ATESOL NT professional learning events

During 2022, ATESOL NT ran five online EAL/D professional learning events, free of charge, for our members. Our presenters were Fran Murray, Carmel Lawrence and Liz Easton. Each of these PLs were provided to support teachers in their delivery of EAL/D programs in the many and varied teaching contexts across the NT. Next year ATESOL NT will be providing more of these online PL events. Stay tuned for information about these sessions in the new year.

Advocacy 2023

Next year ATESOL NT will continue to advocate for the rights of Indigenous EAL/D students to attend well-funded schools that are culturally and physically safe places to learn. We hope to raise awareness that that this requires the provision of quality bilingual education and EAL/D programs which are delivered and supported in schools by Aboriginal teachers and Assistant Teachers – the teaching staff who best understand the home languages and cultures of Indigenous students. Through our advocacy and professional learning events we will highlight that all EAL/D students need to be supported to develop the skills, knowledge and understandings they need to become confident, multilingual, and bicultural young people who can one day go on to be advocates for their families and communities. Like Yingiya Guyula has been since entering the NT parliament in 2016!

ACTA's support 2021–22

ATESOL NT would like to thank and acknowledge ACTA for their support over the last eighteen months. In particular, we thank Helen Moore. Helen's submission writing skills, her advice, and her support have been pivotal and important to ATESOL NT's advocacy over the last eighteen months.

ATESOL NT wishes all our friends and members a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! We will be back in contact early next year with news of ATESOL NT's online professional learning events for 2023.

Best wishes and Merry Christmas!

ATESOL NT Committee

President: Liz Easton

Vice President: Janine Oldfield

Treasurer: Michele Willsher

Secretary: Kim Samuels and Matt Gale

ACTA rep: Fran Murray

Committee members: Liz Clarkson, Lucinda Jurd

To keep in contact and up to date with news and upcoming events please follow [ATESOL NT on Facebook](#). To join or renew membership please visit our website atesolnt.org.au and hit the "register now" tab.