



**The English Teachers
Association of Queensland Inc.**

Providing professional support
and advocacy for English teachers

Secretary's Report

Presented to the 54th Annual General Meeting of
The English Teachers Association of Queensland, Inc.

*Saturday 13 March 2021
Iona College, 85 North Road, Lindum*

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Purpose of the report

This report aims to cover the activities and interests of The English Teachers Association of Queensland Inc. (ETAQ) during 2020.

Executive Committee

Management Committee

The Management Committee met nine times during 2020. Meetings were held monthly except for January, August and December. The February meeting comprised members of the outgoing 2019-20 committee. There was also an extraordinary meeting held in April to discuss the implications of the COVID-19 pandemic, and to develop a range of contingencies for the organisation.

Those elected at the AGM held in March 2020 were:

Position	Name	Meetings attended
President	Dr Lindsay Williams	8/9
Vice President	Anne Wood, Aquinas College	9/9
Secretary	Jeffrey Lewis, Brisbane Grammar School	8/9
Treasurer	Dr Kelli McGraw, QUT	8/9
Professional Learning Director	Julie Arnold, Corinda SHS	9/9
1. Member	Jarred Adams, North Lakes State College	9/9
2. Member	Melissa Blacklock, Corinda SHS	0/9
3. Member	Garry Collins, retired	9/9
4. Member	Fiona Laing, Forest Lake SHS	9/9
5. Member	Debbie Owens, St Ursula's College, Yeppoon	8/9
6. Member	Trish Purcell	9/9
7. Member	Matthew Rigby, Go Grammar Consulting	7/9
8. Member	Naomi Russell, Brisbane Grammar School	8/9

As a new member elected at the 2020 AGM, Debbie Owens attended from the start of the year in order to facilitate a smooth transition onto the committee.

Patron

Dr Sherilyn Lennon was elected as patron of ETAQ by the 2019 Management Committee.

Venue for Management Committee meetings

While the first 2 meetings of the year were held at the offices of the IEUA-QNT (Independent Education Union Australia – Queensland and Northern Territory Branch) in Turbot Street Spring Hill, subsequent meetings were hosted online using Zoom. ETAQ is very thankful to JCQTA, who provide a subscription that teacher associations have been able to access and use to maintain operations in the age of social distancing. We are also appreciative of the union's generous support, which has been in place for many years.

Administration Officer

Trish Purcell continued in her role as the association's part-time Administration Officer.

Membership

The number of financial members of the Association for the last three years were as follows:

Year	Life	Full (i.e. individual)	Student	Retiree	Corporate	Total
2018	9	292	30	11	176	518
2019	10	254	37	17	169	487
2020	10	263	34	9	184	500

Professional Learning Activities

The 2020 professional learning suite was entitled *Diving Deep*—and we certainly needed to dive deep into our creative capacities to keep our professional learning running in 2020. The March Seminar (*Diving Deep into Literature*) and State Conference were cancelled due to COVID-19 restrictions. The May Masterclass (*Diving Deep into Assessment for Learning - online*) went ahead in a modified format.



A major new development for us was to hold our first Student and Teacher seminar: *Diving Deep into the External Examination*. Held over two separate days and available to participants until after the EA's were completed, we are proud of this achievement and look forward to the opportunity to continue to support students and teachers in the future.

The Early Career Conference was an exciting return to face-to-face professional learning. And our Essential English Community of Practice of Event was a successful finale to the year – with many thanks to Citipointe Christian College and our wonderful Management Committee volunteers teaming up to make a combination in-person and on-line offering.

Coffee and Chat

Zoom Meetings, Various dates Terms 1 and 2

Informal conversations

Convened by Lindsay Williams

During the period of home-based learning, ETAQ created an online space for teachers to meet informally to discuss their approaches to online curriculum delivery. These sessions were well attended, which indicated how much our community were craving connection and opportunities to share.

May Masterclass: Diving into Feedback

- Date: Saturday 20 May 2020
- Type: Online video + Zoom Q&A
- Theme: Diving Deep into Feedback
- Format: 2 keynotes + collaborative planning
- Keynote 1: Dr Jill Willis, QUT
- Keynote 2: Dr. Bill Cope, University of Illinois
- Venue: Zoom and Vimeo
- Convenors: Danielle Gordon and Julie Arnold

Diving Deep into External Assessment (Student Event)

- Date: Wednesday 9 September 2020
- Type: Online video + Zoom Q&A
- Theme: Diving Deep into External Assessment
- Format: 1 video examining the essay genre + 1 text-specific lecture
- Text workshops offered by various academics.
- Venue: Zoom and Vimeo
- Convenors: Julie Arnold and Erin Geddes

Diving Deep into External Assessment (Teacher Event)

- Date: Saturday 12 September 2020
- Type: online video + Zoom Q&A
- Theme: Diving Deep into External Assessment
- Format: Workshops on teacher preparation for the exam + Zoom collaboration.
- Venue: Zoom and Vimeo
- Convenors: Julie Arnold and Erin Geddes

Early Career Conference

- Date: Saturday 24 October 2020
- Type: Seminar
- CPD hours: 5 hours 25 minutes
- Format: Series of short presentations
- Venue: Wynnum SHS
- Convenor: Melissa Blacklock

Essential English Community of Practice

- Date: Saturday 7 November 2020
- Type: half-day (9-12:30) class activity
- CPD hours: 3 hours
- Format: Pecha Kucha presentations and 'moderation' of schools' scripts
- Convenor: Natalie Fong and Julie Arnold
- Venue: Citipointe Christian College

Regional Events

Townsville Branch

Presented four activities during 2020, each constituting 2 hours of CPD.

Short Stories

- Date: Saturday 15 February
- Presenters: Emma Monfries and Kiri Lucas
- Venue: Ryan Catholic College, Townsville

Getting students assessment ready for Essential English

- Date: Saturday 2 May
- Presenter: Tony Hytch
- Venue: Zoom

JCU Spectacular

- Date: Saturday 25 July
- Presenter: Dr Emma Maguire and Dr Claire Hansen
- Venue: Zoom

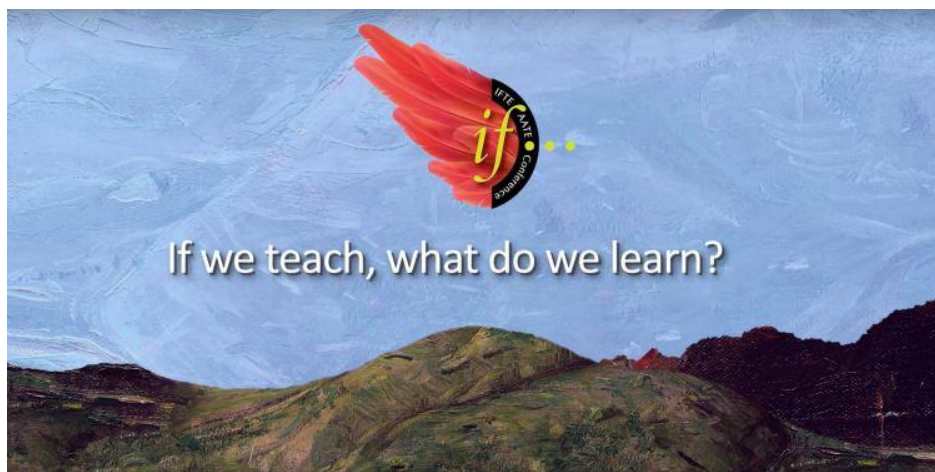
Resource Collaboration Event

- Date: Saturday 17 October

- Presenters: Senior English Department of Southern Cross Catholic College
- Venue: Zoom

2020 AATE/IFTE Conference

The 2020 AATE/IFTE conference was hosted by NSW but held online as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic. The conference spanned the period 6th – 10th July. The theme was 'If...'



Assisted attendance at conferences

Lindsay Williams (president), and Debbie Owens (editor of *Words'Worth*) were assisted with early bird registration to attend the national conference.

2021 AATE/ALEA National Conference



From July 7 to 9 this year, the joint AATE/ALEA national conference will be held. The theme is 'Challenge and Change: Contemporary Literacy and English Teaching'. The conference is being convened by Queensland, with ETAQ and the local ALEA council working collaboratively. Due to uncertainty around COVID-19 and after a great deal of discussion, the national councils of both peak organisations in conjunction with the convenors made the decision to conduct this year's conference fully online. Currently, the various conference committees are working hard to maximise both the professional and personal experience for

registrants, presenters and sponsors. The Garth Boomer address this year will be given by Kamilaroi woman, Dr Melitta Hogarth. Specifically for secondary teachers, other speakers include academic and writer Dr Anita Heiss, writer Dr Benjamin Law and poet Ellen van Neerven. Due to the online nature of the conference, the full registration cost for three days is a very reasonable \$250. Registrations are open now on the website and you can follow the conference on Twitter (@aatealeaconf) and Facebook (aatealeaconference).

AATE - National Activity

In the past twelve months, besides the usual editions of *English in Australia*, AATE has published *Creating Micro Stories* which went on to be named the best Secondary Teaching Resource in the 2020 Educational Publishing Awards Australia. In addition, *Beyond the Dark: Dystopian Texts in the Secondary English Classroom* was published in July. For the first time, the National conference to be held in Sydney was cancelled due to COVID-19 restrictions. However, the convenors from New South Wales rallied and, working to short timelines, conducted the conference online with great success. A review of the Australian Curriculum including English was announced during the year and already AATE has been involved in advocating and feedback on behalf of members throughout the country. Finally, despite the disrupted times of 2020, AATE has improved its financial position and is on track to meet the goals approved by the national council.



**Australian
Association for the
Teaching of
English**

Book Sales

Book sales for 2020 were significantly down due to the lack of in-person professional learning events. However, *Creating Micro Stories*, *Beyond the Dark: Dystopian Texts in the Secondary English Classroom* and *The Artful English Teacher* were sold by mail order. The financial results appear in the Treasurer's Report.

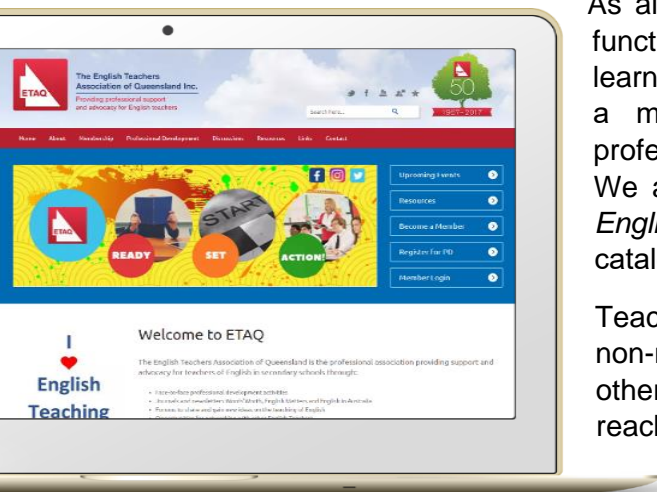
Publications

In her inaugural year as editor of *Words'Worth*, Deb Owens canvassed broad and diverse perspectives on subject English pedagogy and praxis to reflect ETAQ's 2020 theme of Diving Deep. Contributions from regular voices, new ones and practitioners across junior, senior and tertiary platforms informed each of the three journals. They provided valuable ideas across a range of focusses including the new senior English syllabuses as well as engaging classroom teaching practice across the year levels.

Digital Technologies

Online website resources

If anything became clear in 2020, it was the importance of maintaining an online presence in the face of a pandemic. Whilst a lot of in-person events were cancelled or shifted, ETAQ shifted our focus toward developing, growing, and supporting our current online resources.



As always, our website (www.etaq.org.au) offers a range of functionalities, including online registration for professional learning events, online membership sign-up and payment, and a member's section in which resources from various professional learning sessions are available to our members. We also house previous editions of both *Words'Worth* and *English in Australia* in this section, with links to back catalogues to the national body's (AATE) website.

Teachers in schools covered by corporate membership and non-members are also able to sign up to receive e-pistles and other news items which are regularly mailed out. This service reaches over 2500 subscribers.

Engagement with social media

2020 has not been a kind year for face-to-face engagement. Many well-laid plans for increasing our online presence in tandem with the professional learning were quickly thrown out the window in Term 1. However, our online platforms have continued to flourish in the face of social distancing and a pandemic. Our engagement within our social media platforms has significantly increased, with many people joining and participating in online discussions, whether it be questions about the SATE syllabi, or sharing of resources.

As always, we refreshed our graphics to reflect the theme of the 2020 professional learning suite of 'Diving Deep' and engaged our members through a variety of online activities, such as Zoom coffee catch ups, which were signed into at high engagement levels.

We also looked to creating stronger inter-committee partnerships within ETAQ and looked for opportunities to better promote both our professional learning, publications, and social events happening throughout the year.



Expanding our online engagement

We went in to 2020 looking to continue to build and sustain our engagement from 2019, with an aim to have a 10% increase in likes/follows for the year. The SMT are proud to say that we've blown those out of the water, with some significant milestones reached this year, including:

- Reaching over 3000 likes on our Facebook page
- An increase of 1000 members to our closed Facebook group
- Our Instagram and Twitter accounts continuing to see steady and consistent growth
- The introduction of a LinkedIn profile to our online platforms.

Statistics for membership engagement across our platforms is as follows:

Platform	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Facebook Page (likes)	1220	1764	2225	2722	3081
Facebook Closed Group	400	503	832	1202	2202
Twitter	Unavailable	746	840	873	902
Instagram	N/A	143	379	491	549
SoundCloud	N/A	N/A	N/A	12	12
LinkedIn	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	30

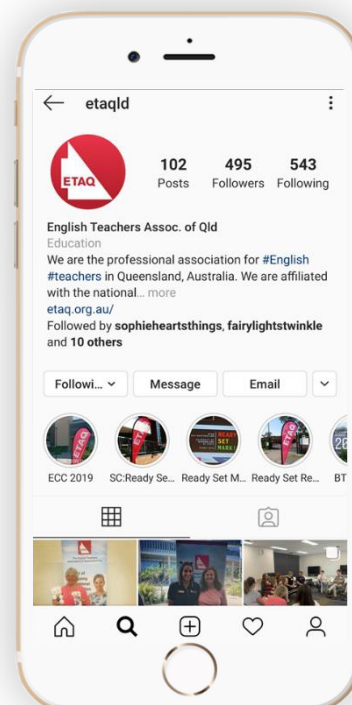
Working with regional members

We are continuing to work with our regional branches to better incorporate and promote the phenomenal work and activities happening in these places. We are looking to further increase this expansion in 2021.

Improving our practice

We have continued to review and reflect on our management of the online social media practices and have continued to follow the processes of the ETAQ Media Policy approved in 2019 and reviewed in early 2020 to reflect the adding of the LinkedIn platform. This policy outlines how we approach:

- ethical and appropriate use of our digital media platforms,
- guidelines for the collection, storage, and sharing of member resources,
- the adaptation and sharing of ETAQ and third-party media
- processes and guidelines for the operations of the ETAQ SMT



- processes and documentation regarding informed consent of the collection, storage, and usage of image (both still and moving) or creative works for the purposes of ETAQ business.

A copy of this policy is available on the ETAQ website.

Looking to the future

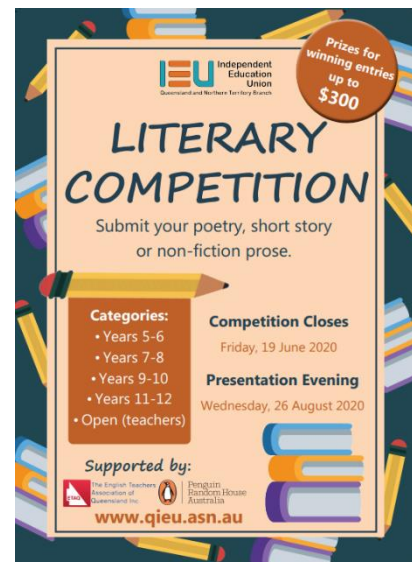
2020 will see the end of Jarred being our Social Media Team Liaison, but the SMT will still be going strong. 2021 will see the implementation of new and exciting opportunities for its members to engage online, as well as in person for a variety of events and questions, and we look forward to enriching our members' experiences with ETAQ in the digital space.

Competitions

QIEU Literary Competition 2020

In these uncertain times, it was wonderful to see so many students chose to participate in a literary activity outside of the school environment. New Zealand Educator Terry Locke suggests that when students are able to write personal content in their writing and are able to participate in a competition, it provides them with intrinsic motivation for writing. The number of entries submitted to the 2020 IEUA-QNT Literary competition – which equalled previous competition numbers - are a testament to this notion.

The recent year has been extraordinary for Queensland school students; their experiences during the drought, bush fires and school lock down were reflected in the genres and topics addressed in their entries. Fantasy, gothic, dystopian and science fiction genres were extremely popular, and common topics included the impact of virtual reality, pandemics, and bushfires on the individual. The entries in the non-fiction section of the competition were creative, well-researched, and impressively written essays and articles that raised awareness on a variety of topical social concerns. They covered an important range of issues including; politics and ethics, human rights, racism, historical movements, sexism, media and technology, social prejudice, the place of poetry in society and dystopic influences on modern culture. Many of these essays skilfully drew on conventions of journalistic writing: punchy headlines, eye-catching images, pop-out by lines, sardonic kickers and catchy hooks. With writing of this quality, the fate of writing in the public sphere is bright, even if the take-home warnings of many of these articles were grim.



Branches

Branches in Townsville and Darling Downs continue to have healthy membership and strong engagement.

Peter Botsman Memorial Award

ETAQ has received and endorsed a nomination for the school-based Peter Botsman Memorial award, which was due to be presented at the 2020 State Conference. However, the unfortunate cancellation of this event meant that the presentation of this award needed to be postponed. ETAQ plans to present Adam Davy from Kelvin Grove State College with this award at our next in-person professional learning event in March 2021.

Joint Council of Queensland Teacher Associations

Although some of the plans to promote teacher associations through JCQTA were not able to go ahead in 2020, a lot of work and advocacy was still completed.

The current JCQTA executive consists of Danielle Gordon (ETAQ), Sheryl Saunders (MLTAQ), Phillipa Greig (BTAQ), Jackie Mergard (STAQ), Angela White (Adolescent Success) and Anne Wood (ETAQ), so ETAQ is well represented in this state association. This year the executive worked diligently to produce a new strategic plan to clearly express the goals of JCQTA and a new constitution ensuring the currency of the association. The 2020-2022 strategic plan outlines the goals of JCQTA as:

Goal 1: Establish and maintain connections to advocate for improved recognition of teacher associations.

Goal 2: Contribute to enhanced professional support of member associations.

In line with Goal 1, 2020 has been a successful year in providing JCQTA with opportunities to advocate on behalf of all of our member associations. This year we have had the opportunity to provide feedback, be a critical friend and be involved in decisions regarding:

- NAPLAN review (NSW, QLD, Vic)
- Learning progressions and formative assessment meetings at DoE
- Education council briefings at DoE

At a federal level, through our membership with APTA we have been able to provide a strong Queensland voice in the following:

- Quarterly meetings with Australian Government Department of Education, Skills and Employment
- Review into Senior Secondary Pathways
- Inquiry into teaching in remote and complex environments
- National Strategy to Address Abuse of Teachers and School Leaders
- Review of Red Tape (Aitsl critical friend)
- National architecture review (ACARA, Aitsl, ESA)
- Meetings with CEO of National Evidence Institute – Dr Jenny Donovan
- Australian Curriculum Review discussions with ACARA
- Teach for Australia future leaders program

In line with Goal 2, and supporting professional learning and collaboration, JCQTA will be holding the annual President's Dinner on **Wednesday February 17th**, where we will be able to share our plans to support all Queensland teacher associations.

JCQTA continues to be agile in ways of communication and collaboration as they take up the opportunities digital conferencing offers, and ETAQ is committed as a willing partner.

Conclusion

It almost seems clichéd to draw attention to the novelty and uniqueness of 2020. Despite the tremendous challenges, there have been a number of essential changes that the circumstances of the year have forced upon the organisation.

The successful pivot towards online delivery of professional learning was possible because of the significant investment of time and energy of committee members. Pleasingly, it has accelerated our strategic plans to ensure that members in regional and rural Queensland are able to access a more complete suite of learning and networking opportunities. In addition, the use of video conferencing technology to facilitate Management Committee meetings has enabled committee members from outside the SE corner to help shape the direction of the organisation. These are, unequivocally, positive developments.

In a time of economic uncertainty, and when professional associations across the country are struggling, we are so proud that our 2020 membership numbers are comparable to the 2019 membership base. ETAQ exists to advocate for and support English teachers, but it's easy to forget that it only functions because of the voluntary efforts of these same English teachers. Our community of practice has been so generous and collegial, and we are so grateful for the support of ETAQ membership and broader professional community.

2021 promises to be another huge year for the organisation. We are excited and hopeful that we may be able to bring people together in a safe manner after so long apart. There is much to reflect upon, and we must prepare to make our collective voices heard in relation to the significant 'Challenge and Change' that continues to alter our educational landscape.

Jeffrey Lewis

Secretary for The English Teachers Association of Queensland, Inc.

13 March 2021