



Within Tuition

Australian Tutoring Association (ATA) Inc.

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The Australian Tutoring Association (ATA) newsletter

Welcome to the second issue of the Australian Tutoring Association (ATA) newsletter for 2007.

In this issue we look at the following areas informing and affecting tutoring in Australia:

- The Federal Government's 2007 Budget announcement regarding Literacy and Numeracy Vouchers.
- The role of tutors in providing support to students by working with schools (principals and teachers) and parents

- The problem of insurances: both - public liability (PL) and professional indemnity (PI)
- The ATA and the provision of business/commercial advice
- A consideration as to the ATA structure

Central to ATA planning and focus is the provision and allocation of a very large pool of money by the Federal government in the form of tutorial vouchers. These \$700 vouchers are designed to

assist students requiring help in the areas of literacy or numeracy.

The ATA believes that students' interests are best served when tutors work collaboratively with schools, parents and teachers.

These articles are informative and should stimulate much thought provoking discussion amongst members and also within the industry generally.

For insight into the latest ATA initiatives please read the back page of the newsletter. Ed

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President's Message



some of the opportunities that are arising for the Association. Some new initiatives of the ATA are in the preliminary planning stage and will be elucidated further in the September Edition.

The big news for us at present is the delivery of the Commonwealth Government's 2007 Budget in May, which clearly states the intention of the Australian government to spend a substantial amount of money on tuition for students. The announcement of \$457million for an expanded tutoring voucher scheme for the Years 2008 - 2011 presents an excellent opportunity for ATA members. The National Literacy

and Numeracy Program identifies students who have under performed in the national benchmark tests.

This initiative recognises the role of tutoring as a vital part of Australian student's education. Which is wonderful acknowledgement of what we as tutors CAN do!

The ATA Committee are putting together some ideas on how we may become further involved in this activity. At this stage we may say "watch this space!"

May I take this opportunity to thank you, the members for your ongoing support.

- Mary O'Brien, President

Welcome to this, our June edition of the ATA newsletter, Within Tuition. I would like to firstly take the opportunity to congratulate and thank the Committee for all of its hard work thus far in 2007.

We are very aware of the work ahead for us and indeed feel very excited about

The ATA and the provision of business or commercial advice

The ATA Committee and the ATA Head Office do not provide any commercial advice to people wishing to set up a business(es) in the tutoring industry. Nor does the ATA provide any legal advice.

Anyone wishing to set up a business should do their own research regarding the requirements of local, State and Federal governments. Businesses are welcome to use the ATA Code of Conduct as a guide as to the practices and procedures adopted by members, as a minimum, in the conduct of their own businesses.

Please note however, that abiding by the ATA Code of Conduct does not, of itself, guarantee that an application for ATA membership will be accepted.

The 2007 Commonwealth Budget - National Literacy and Numeracy Vouchers

The 2007 May budget brought an announcement from the Commonwealth Government that the present Reading Assistance Voucher (RAV) Scheme will be expanded over the next 4 years. Specifically, the government announced that the following levels of funding for the new expanded program would apply from 2008:

- 2007-08 \$70.9 million
- 2008-09 \$120.9 million
- 2009-10 \$131.4 million
- 2010-11 \$134.1 million

This means that a total of \$457.4 million will be allocated for the purposes of assisting students who are not meeting national literacy or numeracy benchmarks. The assistance will be provided by way of a \$700 voucher to parents that can be applied to tuition for either literacy or

numeracy support.

From 1 January 2008 the programme will apply to those students who do not achieve the literacy or numeracy benchmarks in Years 3,5 or 7. The voucher programme will be extended to cover Year 9 students from 2009, following the implementation of national testing for students in Year 9 from 2008.

It is important to note that the vouchers can be used for literacy or numeracy support: students cannot receive two vouchers concurrently. This means that if they fall below national benchmarks in both literacy and numeracy then the parents will have to decide which one to seek tutoring in.

For more information about the budget see:
<http://www.budget.gov.au/2007%2D08/bp2/html/expend-09.htm>

The implications of the budget announcement for tutoring in Australia

by Mohan Dhall

Tutoring in Australia has been given a major boost in the past several years due to the Commonwealth Government initiatives in regards to tutoring. Starting with the Tutorial Voucher Initiative (TVI) and expanding into the Reading Assistance Voucher (RAV) Scheme the latest budget announcement is a huge boost to tutoring in Australia.

Tutoring, or the commercial/private education sector, complements all levels of education: primary and secondary, public and private. Historically, tutoring has played a role in the lives of a huge number of people. Many people have been overheard to remark: "I remember when I was a boy/girl and I got help from the uni student next door".

There has always been a culture of mentorship in Australia. The tutoring sector, as brought together by the ATA, has formalised and professionalised such mentorship. The sector has also grown rapidly in Australia. In NSW alone it has been estimated that in the past three years the number of registered businesses has grown from 500 to 750. In Queensland there are over 350 registered businesses. This is exclusive of the market that is created by teachers who tutor after hours but do not operate registered businesses. Thus, the total

size of the market is very large.

The government's stated purpose is to assist students at risk due to their low levels of literacy and/or numeracy, as determined by national benchmark tests. This purpose has been matched by the allocation of a large amount of funding.

So, where does the private tuition market fit into this, and more, what are the implications for the ATA? Clearly, an effective roll out of the new programme will require a huge number of tutors. Yet, it is not just numbers that are required. What is more important is that tutors involved in any roll out are appropriately screened, trained and accountable for the tutoring that they do.

The private tuition market, as brought together by the ATA, is well placed to assist the Government in carrying out this initiative, because it can lobby for the inclusion into the programme of only those tutors prepared to be open and accountable, prepared to work with schools and parents and prepared to have their methodologies open to scrutiny. Moreover, an assessment by the ATA has revealed that there are particular groups of students that need

special care and attention when it comes to the provision of tutoring services. For example, those students living in rural and remote Australia.

Helping the rural and remote students

Many rural and remote students are at great disadvantage arising from geographical/location factors. Tutors can be hard to source. The ATA believes that flexible delivery, including the use of internet technology and other ICTs, must be considered for such students. Moreover, it must be recognised that such students may need more than \$700 each so that essential infrastructure can be created to meet their needs. In this way all students can benefit from this very welcome Commonwealth Government initiative.

In Summary

Tutoring in Australia has become increasingly organised. The Federal Government's budget announcement is an enormous demonstration of confidence in the industry. The industry must seize the moment by taking the necessary steps forward in accountability which characterises being a mainstream player in education in Australia.



The role of tutors with respect to schools and parents

- Mohan Dhall

Tutors should never work with students in isolation of the context in which the tutoring takes place. Primarily, students are educated by families and schools. Tutors at best act as mentors, assisting the student to get the best out of themselves. Families and schools also seek to give the best to children at all ages and all stages of academic development.

Tutors who work in partnership with schools, serve the best interest of the student and the family. Educators in schools are extremely well placed to assist to identify which areas a student needs most help with. At the primary school level teachers spend several hours per day with their students and would tend to know them extremely well. In the senior school, teachers do not see students as often, but can nevertheless fairly quickly ascertain areas that may require intervention. Tutors who work closely with teachers will therefore be well placed to serve the needs of the student in the best way possible.

Accountability in education

Tutors must always be accountable for any work they do with students. That is, work must be premised on clear goals and outcomes. The intentions of any tutoring should be clear from the outset. Moreover, tutors should be mindful that success in tutoring is not only measured in the marks that students attain. Less measurable is a rise in confidence and a feeling of intrinsic worth arising from greater academic competence. In reality, the most successful tutors, like the best teachers, should strive to put themselves out of work in the sense that they enable their students to 'learn to learn'. Such a position requires that tutors place educational values above commercial princi-

ples. Educational accountability requires that educators justify the work they do with students, report honestly/accurately, report regularly and do not create dependencies.

Tutorial vouchers and accountability

Accountability in tutoring can also be encouraged through accountability to mainstream educators and educational systems. In an earlier article I wrote about triangulation. This is a system that involves tutors working with schools and parents for the benefit of the child. Tutoring complements mainstream public and private education. It is desirable if all parties in education work in the best interests of children. In order to do so, tutors and other stakeholders need to 'give up' something. They need to give up a sense of 'sole ownership' in regards to the education of the child, and cultivate a sense of partnership.

If tutorial vouchers are to be the success they can and should be then all key stakeholders must work together in the interests of the students who are being given the vouchers. This means that tutors must be open to being accountable to Principals, teachers and parents. It also means that mainstream educators need to trust that tutors, appropriately screened, trained and educated, will be able to assist them to help children in need.

The provision of literacy and numeracy vouchers by the Commonwealth Government is a provision of foundational support for the most disadvantaged of learners. All tutors involved in the programme must remember that an intervention made can have long lasting benefits. Thus a strong sense of community should underpin the approach to the tutoring to be delivered via the voucher system.

The Problem of Insurances

by Mohan Dhall

Many tutors run registered businesses. A much larger number of tutors are actually teachers who 'moonlight' after hours. Whilst many registered businesses have insurance, the vast majority of private tutors do not. This, pool of tutors is generally not insured for either Public Liability (PL) or Professional Indemnity (PI) purposes.

There are several reasons for the lack of cover. These include:

- A lack of awareness for the need for insurance cover as a financial risk management tool
- The very high cost of cover for private individuals
- The difficulty in finding an insurer that will be prepared to cover private tutors at a reasonable cost
- The low risk faced by such persons of the likelihood to ever face a claim requiring cover by insurance

Public liability (PL) insurance can be an important factor for tutors that find themselves in a situation of allowing a

client, or clients, to come to the tutor's house. If a client is injured on the tutor's premises then PL insurance may be of assistance. Public Indemnity insurance can also be used as a financial risk management tool. PI can be a factor in a situation that could arise if a client takes advice and relies upon it to their detriment. An example of such advice would be that of a tutor suggesting that a student leave school to pursue a particular career, making suggestions for university study options or advising clients regarding health choices or the use of various therapists.

The ATA is currently assessing various insurance options with a view to providing a very affordable range of insurances and insurance options for members. As the industry body the ATA keeps member interests foremost in its activities. Insurances are generally considered to be appropriate financial risk management tools and the availability for cheap PL and PI insurance should be of great assistance to ATA members.

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ATA Committee Meetings

ATA Committee meetings are held 6 - 8 times per year. Members are welcome to email Committee members to have items discussed at Committee level. All issues raised, ideas and initiatives are taken seriously and assessed in the light of the best interests of the ATA.

Note that views expressed in this Newsletter do not necessarily reflect the views of the ATA Committee. Private contributions are welcome and are a necessary aspect of raising issues for discussion amongst ATA members and in the wider community.

The ATA is currently reviewing its management structure with a view to delivering the type of organisation that can most effectively represent member interests, whilst benchmarking accountable, open and honest tutoring practices that serve the best interests of our clients. Any structural changes will be detailed in future newsletters and on our website.

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ATA Updates:

Publicity

The ATA is always looking for opportunities to promote our aims of raising consumer protection issues and raising consumer awareness on the need for accountable, open and honest tutoring. If you have an issue you feel needs to be brought to the attention of the public please contact the Public Officer of the ATA.

Membership Numbers

All ATA members have been allocated a Membership Number. This number is on the website and can be quoted in any official correspondence. Tutors will be aware that under the present RAV the Federal Government asks prospective providers to quote their Membership Number or to provide details of membership with any other relevant professional body. Such membership is understood to include membership of professional associations such as the Association of Australian Mathematics Teachers, the various literacy and English Teachers Associations (State and Federal).

Sticker availability

ATA bumper and window stickers are now available. There are two different versions available (see insert in newsletter). If you wish to purchase additional stickers they may be bought for \$1 each. Please contact the ATA office at the number, address or email on this page.

Back Issues of the Newsletter

Previous issues of the ATA newsletter are available upon request. Moreover, they can be downloaded from the ATA website: www.ata.edu.au.