



Within Tuition

Australian Tutoring Association (ATA) Ltd.

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December 2009

The Australian Tutoring Association (ATA) Ltd Newsletter

The ATA Annual General Meeting 2009

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The ATA Annual General Meeting (AGM) was held on Tuesday 22nd December at 6 College Street in Croydon, NSW. The meeting commenced at 10am sharp and was very well attended. Formal proceedings were completed by 10.30 and thereafter followed a morning tea and the final ATA Board meeting of 2009.

Newsletter contents 1

The formal aspects of the AGM were characterised by the releasing of the President's Report, the Secretary's Report and the Treasurer's Report. These reports are available from the ATA website: www.ata.edu.au. A summary of each of the Reports is presented below.

Reports from the 2009 AGM 1,2

Summary of President's Report AGM 2009

2009 has proven to be a one of the toughest years in recent memory for small business. The ATA has shown itself to be resilient and strong through the toughest of economic times. It follows that any businesses, and by extension any association representing those businesses, that have survived and prospered through this year are well set to continue to grow and thrive. We have grown market share through the year. Membership continues to be our focus and financially we are sound. This year we have achieved a lot to be proud of:

A meeting with the NSW OFT 2

We have established a formal banking partnership with the Westpac bank that provides members with discounted banking products. This along with our insurance partnership with RGIB/AAMI gives our members a considerable competitive advantage over non members i.e. it is better to be a member than not. Therefore we can continue to grow membership and encourage positive industry behaviours.

A meeting with the NSW Director General of Education 2

We have recently held discussions with the Director General of Education in NSW - at his invitation. It is a real positive that government is now recognising us and our role and actively sourcing our input on policy and direction.

ATAS, PSPI, An Even Start (AES) - Where Are They?? 3

We have established initial contact and held meetings with bodies that represent the tutoring industry internationally. This is with a view to longer term formal exchange of ideas and policies. This can only be a benefit to us. Issues with regard to membership, board structure, future policy, training and education can be compared and contrasted and best practice sourced.

The ATA President in America (ITA) 4

We are continuing to source industry relationships that will offer member discounts for industry specific products and services. Insurance and banking are just a start.

The ATA President in America (NTA) 5

The ATA has remained constant in maintaining focus on our Code of Conduct. This is the bedrock on what we lay our continued success upon. We cannot stress enough how good industry behavior affects positive government and media feedback. This helps us all. Our product does work; we need to ensure that it is always delivered in an ethical and responsible manner both business wise and educationally. The ATA Board is continuing to review and update the Code wherever we see the necessity but would remind all members that adherence to our code is compulsory to maintain membership. The consumer knows that when they source an ATA affiliated business that it will have behaviours and policies that can be guaranteed.

Tutoring in the News 5

As always I want to thank all those members who have taken the time to contribute ideas and provide feedback throughout the year. Member's contributions always provide invaluable insight and assistance in shaping the future direction of the Australian Tutoring Association.

Child protection and tutors in Victoria 5

Finally a special thanks to the members of the board who voluntarily give of their time and efforts to further our industry. A lot depends on their continued support and hard work. Best wishes for the holiday season. Chris Druett – Chairman.

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ATA AGM Summary of Secretary's Report

Membership and Insurance

As at 22nd December 2009 the Australian Tutoring Association (ATA) Ltd. Has 311 paid up members . Of these 278 are full members (2008: 272) and 33 are associate members (2008: 20). Of these, approximately half have taken up the Insurance offered by the ATA with its alliance with AAMI/ Suncorp.

Financials

The balance in the Company's account is in the order of \$38,000. This balance has been maintained throughout the financial year despite the cost of a part time employee and the funding of an international study trip investigating the possibilities for the ATA.

Board of Directors

The Board of Directors underwent one change with the resignation of Mazen Fahme from Alpha Omega Education Centre. This means that the current Board consists of the following Directors:

Christopher Druett, President, Tutoring for Excellence P/L
Mohan Dhall, CEO and company Secretary, private tutor
Bill Edwards, Treasurer, Literacy Circle P/L
Storm McGrath, CEO of Kip McGrath Ltd.
Paul Flymen, Director, Zambusters P/L

It is the view of the current Board that at least one more active Board member should be appointed for 2010.

Notable achievements for 2009

The ATA had several significant events occur in 2009. These include each of the following:

- An on-going alliance with RGIB, which has been taken over by the AAMI-Suncorp Group. This alliance provides substantial benefits for ATA members and has assisted with maintaining membership numbers

- A significant alliance with Westpac Bank Corporation offering members discounted banking services
- An in-principle agreement has been given from FINSIA to set up an interim Board which can look at and manage the 2010 launch of the ATA Tuition-Enterprise Scholarship Scheme
- Assisting with the set up and launch of the New Zealand Tutoring Association (NZTA) in very late 2008
- Undertaken a significant study tour of tutoring associations in USA with a view to 'placing the ATA' and also obtaining ideas and directions for 2010
- Assisted in resolution of several disputes within the industry between consumers and tuition enterprises
- Had a meeting with the Director-General of Education in NSW and also with the NSW Office of Fair Trading (OFT)

Future directions 2010

There are significant opportunities arising for the ATA both domestically and offshore in the coming year:

- Certificate of tuition and accreditation schemes to be finalised and launched
- Finalisation and launch of the ATA Tuition-Enterprise Scholarship scheme
- Driving revenue growth through further corporate alliances
- Driving membership growth through the offering of a broader range of services to members

Mohan Dhall - ATA Secretary

A meeting with the NSW Director General of Education by Mohan Dhall

The ATA was invited in October to meet with the NSW Director General of Education and policy makers from the Department of Education. The meeting was very warm and open, with a broad range of issues raised. The issues arising from tutoring cross both commercial and educational spheres and the discussion ranged across areas of accountability and in both areas. Tuition was acknowledged as a phenomenon that characterises the educational market and that has been growing steadily for a number of years. It was also acknowledged that the best results from tuition arise when teachers in mainstream schools, parents and tutors work in partnership, placing the student's interest foremost.

A meeting with the NSW Office of Fair Trading (OFT) by Mohan Dhall

On the afternoon of Tuesday 17th November the ATA met with Joe D'Ermilio for the Parramatta Office of Fair Trading. This was a productive meeting in which the ATA put the view that the most vulnerable of tuition clients needed greatest protection. Specifically, this is a reference to those from Non English Speaking background (NESB) families and those from low-socio economic circumstances, both of whom place a high value on education. To this end, the OFT has offered that when workshops are held in communities where there are such vulnerabilities as outlined above, the ATA will be invited to make representations as to how prospective tuition clients can make informed choices when accessing commercial tuition services.

ATAS, PSPI, An Even Start (AES) - Where Are They??

By Dave Burrell

This letter seeks to ask questions in relation to provision of educational assistance to Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal children who failed to reach benchmarks in Literacy and Numeracy as measured by the NAPLAN Testing. Virtually nothing appears to have happened to take on the function of the Aboriginal Tuition Assistance Scheme (ATAS), Parent School Partnership Initiative (PSPI) and An Even Start. (AES) The questions arise from a huge vacuum, which was created nearly 12 months ago by the Commonwealth Government when it passed its responsibility in these areas across to State Governments.

Master Coaching is just one Tuition College, which had been involved in all 3 programs up to 2008. Under PSPI, Master Coaching Hawkesbury assisted 25 local Aboriginal students in years 5,6 and 7 in a 20-week literacy program in 2007. In the "An Even Start "(AES) Program, 80 children were helped on 1-to-1 basis in 2008/2009. The College also provided tuition assistance [under ATAS] for up to 30 Aboriginal students for up to 4 hours per week for each child per year, over the past 15 years.

All this has stopped since the end of 2009.

Repeated attempts to communicate with the NSW Department of Education (DET) and individual schools has yielded no positive response towards establishing programs where we could play a part. All the expertise and skill, which has been developed over these 15 years in supporting these schemes, is now sitting idle. The culture of co-operation between State Schools and the tuition industry clearly needs to be stimulated from the top.

Is there any intention to encourage schools to engage outside help in developing their programs?

From our perspective the "An Even Start" or AES program was an excellent project from which the children gained considerable benefits.

Where is the statistical analysis of the results of this program?

Much of the funding has gone directly to schools with restrictions on using outside tuition. Tuition assistance for Aboriginal children (under ATAS) over the past 15 years or more has gone from: help to all Years, then just assistance to Years 9 to 12. It now applies to Years 11 & 12 only – all very much too late! If retention rates for Indigenous Australian students are to be lifted, help needs to occur early.

Is it true there is no longer to be positive discrimination for Indigenous Australian children in new funding arrangements?

Is it also true that there has been an effective drop of 140% in funding for similar schemes to be organised by the States?

The children clearly are the losers here.

Tuition colleges have a legitimate role to play in assisting these children; teaching in a totally different environment and in tiny groups, free of peer influences with no loss of school class time are just some of the obvious advantages. After-school tuition complements the excellent work done by schools and can lift some of the burden placed on the schools by the community.

Please explain! What is happening?

The ATA and Westpac jointly announced in October 2009 that ATA members would be able to access discounted banking services. The details of the arrangement are available from the ATA website: www.ata.edu.au and the announcement details can be seen in the September-October 2009 ATA Newsletter. Other corporate partnerships shall be entered into in 2010.



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Summary of ATA and National Tutoring Association (NTA) Meeting

by Chris Druett

Chris Druett President ATA,
Kabir Kassam (V.President) NTA & CEO Brilliance Academy
Lyn Giese (President) NTA
Apologies – Sandi Ayaz (Chief Executive Director) NTA

History of the NTA

The NTA started in 1992 as a support organisation for the college tuition industry. It has since evolved and grown to cover all year groups and all types of tutoring. However it was not until 1999 that the association began moving into the commercial tuition sector. The membership is still dominated by college tuition in this shapes the organisation's attitude and structure. It does however have some 52% of members who are non-college based tutors e.g. private businesses, community-based programs, faith-based programs, home school tutors and tutors from pre- to high school.

The NTA is very focused on pedagogy and educational quality as a framework for business practice. This is evidenced by their Code of Ethics. This Code runs to one A4 page and deals entirely with educational practice. Their mission statement also reflects this stating "Our mission is to foster the advancement of professional and peer tutoring, support research into best practices and standards for tutors, support tutor training, advocate for tutor certification and uphold the code of ethics." This all reflects their history of being a training and support organisation for college students working as part time tutors.

There are approximately 16,000 members of the NTA at present, with estimates of current practising tutors in the US of up to (or even more than) 1,000,000.

The NTA board is selected internally from members only. It is not an elected platform. There are 6 sitting executives with a complete board of 14 directors. All are voluntary except the Chief Executive who receives a small wage. They have phone conferences every 4-6 weeks, usually meeting face to face once (at the annual conference) or twice a year.

The NTA do almost no government lobbying at either federal or state level. Co-operation with the school sector is done at an individual business level and not through the NTA. The NTA offers members:

- The benefit of association
- Reduced costs for background checks.
- A quarterly newsletter (containing no advertising)
- An annual conference that runs over two days.

Membership is stratified. Initially tutors become members for a very small fee of up to \$50 per annum. All members must undergo a background check. Background checks, which normally cost \$60, are discounted with membership. These are outsourced and run through a private company. Member Certification can follow but is not compulsory.

Certification can take a number of forms or levels:

1. Basic certification can take two forms
 - Face to face training
 - Online – Crossroads to learning
2. Advanced Accreditation
3. Master Trainer Level

Basic certification and The Crossroads program both require a minimum of 50 hours of tuition and 10 hours training. It costs around \$200 - this is more expensive for the online model. The Basic accreditation can be completed in a group situation which reduces costs further and are also available and run in the day before the NTA's annual association conference. All accreditation expires after 2 years. In the US all teachers need to complete ongoing training to remain certified. The NTA has allowed for the tutor training courses to be used towards this teacher accreditation.

The NTA performs about 400 of these Basic accreditation courses per year. All course summaries are available on the NTA website. There are four Master trainers in the NTA, and they mark course work and present the courses. The online training program is outsourced and run by a private business.

The Annual conference uses a large portion the budget. It takes up to six months to organise and runs over two days (plus the pre-conference accreditation training day offered). It is run from a revolving location each year. The cost to attend is in the order of US\$300 per head. This does not cover accommodation or food. There is an attempt to run a thematic approach each year. The conferences usually attract somewhere between 200 and 300 hundred attendees. Numbers are capped. They are not commercial in nature, rather have a more of an educational focus.

The meeting finished with an invitation for us to attend the next annual conference and perhaps even their board meeting that takes place during this conference.

Significance for the ATA

The ATA has come from a focus on consumer protection and benchmarking best practice standards. Our Code of Conduct has similarities with the notion of the NTA's Code of Ethics. The NTA has an advanced understanding of tutor accreditation processes and runs an excellent and well attended national conference.

The ATA could learn lessons from other tutoring associations. Great merit is to be had from having a dialogue and a reciprocal exchange with other similar industry bodies. It was very interested meeting with the NTA and I was impressed by their educational focus. The ATA Board looks forward to an ongoing dialogue and exchange with the NTA.



A meeting with the ITA in the USA

by Chris Druett

History of the ITA (International Tutoring Association)

Mark Greenwood works full time as a tutor on a college* campus in Los Angeles. He is also involved in the day to day management and running of the campus' tutoring program. He saw a need to develop a formal training agenda for the college students that were working, both on campus, and privately, to develop their skill set for delivering tutoring.

The ITA is not an industry representative organisation as such, more a small business that was set up in response to a need in the market. Mark offered some valuable insight into the industry in the US and was very welcoming and open with advice as to training programs and other organisations.

Essentially the ITA is focused on tutor training for the "college" environment. Just as in my meeting with the NTA, it was apparent that the industry in the US has historically been dominated by this segment of the market. That is not to say that large tutoring organisations don't exist that specialise in the school age students, in fact just the opposite. There is obviously a sizable industry, dominated by a few large commercial operators: Sylvan, Huntington, Kumon, ClubZ, Tutor Nation.Com to name a few of the larger ones. What is apparent however is that these businesses do not participate as yet in any industry-wide representative tutoring organisation. Those associations that have arisen have morphed from the college tutoring system.

Mark mentioned that there were a couple of other tutor bodies that we were not aware of: the College Reading and Learning Association (CRLA) and the Association of Colleges for Tutoring & Learning Assistance (ACTLA). But again they are College-centric.

Basically Mark Greenwood began ITA by publishing a Tutor Guide book. This has since grown into a training program that he now sells on the web. It is deliberately "basic" in nature and has been up and running in its current format for about two years. ITA has had about 700 fully paid up customers in that time. A couple of things to note from ITS's setup: Firstly his customers have come from 10 different countries, over 95% from the US. Secondly, all tutors who are enrolled privately, receive certification on completion and a significant number have yet to complete the process and receive their certification. Thirdly, his largest customer is a business who employs a large numbers of college students to tutor privately. Lastly, certification lasts for life.

I got the impression that Mark was a committed and dedicated tutor who was acting with integrity and honesty. He was very encouraged by our direction and motivation.

For more information about the ITA you can visit their website at: <http://www.itatutor.org/about.php>

* NB: Note that the term 'college' here means Years 11 and up, including university.

The ATA in the Press

by Mohan Dhall

In early December 2009 Maralyn Parker from the Daily Telegraph wrote an article about a tuition company making claims about the number of its students had gained entry into academically selective schools in NSW. Of the 4,152 available places the business claimed that 1,041 students had been enrolled in its courses. Parker says that if the claims made are true then there is a problem with the system for student entry into selective schools. In essence there would be an implied bias towards those whom have been tutored. Wider concerns are that the statistics may be inflated or untrue. Certainly at least one of the particular tutoring company's claims.

Clause 18 of the ATA Code of Conduct states that there should be a focus on truth-in-advertising and that any use of statistics should be relevant and verifiable.

Clause 19 says that promotional material should not encourage unrealistic expectations of the outcomes attainable from the tuition.

All educators know that the ownership of student performance vests with the students and their family foremost. Therefore for a tuition company to claim ownership over student success seems unfair and possibly misleading. In any case, the use of a student's academic success to push the commercial interests of private enterprise is contrary to the spirit of academic endeavour shown by the student.

Reference: Parker, M, "Meet the pick of the crop on our selection", 08.12.09, Daily Telegraph

Tutors must act under the Working with Children (WWC) Check, Victoria

The ATA has been advised that there are changes to the WCC in Victoria. In a letter received recently from their Department of Justice, we are advised that as the Working with Children (WWC) Check is being phased in (through the period 2006-2011) the time has come for coaches and tutors to have their background checks done. Each year additional occupations are being added to the list of persons who must have mandatory checks completed. By June 30, 2010 all coaching and tuition services working in Victoria must apply to have the WWC Check completed. Otherwise, persons working in the tuition sphere may be subject to penalties under the Working with Children Act (Vic). The ATA STRONGLY supports this move by the Victorian government and advises ALL tutors working in Victoria to make necessary applications if they have not already done so. Over time the ATA hope to see a uniform national set of child protection laws and as a matter of urgency wants such laws implemented in South Australia. For more information about the Victorian laws visit the following website:

<http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/workingwithchildren>

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ATA Board Meetings

The ATA Board meets from time to time (at least four times per year face to face) and conducts regular teleconferences. The ATA Board aims to improve the range of services offered to ATA members.

Members are welcome to contribute items for the Board to discuss through contacting one of the Board members or emailing the ATA at the addresses listed below. Members are invited to contribute to the newsletter, which is published quarterly. The ATA Newsletter is distributed in hard copy form to all members and is also available on the ATA website for download.

Within Tuition Editor: Mohan Dhall
mdhall@ata.edu.au; Ph (02) 9704 5724 or mobile on (0408) 619 714

Contacting Us

For contributions and comments please email the ATA mdhall@ata.edu.au or mlopez@ata.edu.au; Alternatively, mail us at:

Australian Tutoring Association (ATA) Ltd.
PO Box 256
Croydon, NSW 2132

Phone (02) 9704 5724; (0408) 619 714
Fax: (02) 9704 5677

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ATA Updates:

The NSW Office of Fair Trading (OFT) will shortly release a warning to parents in regards to tutoring services and making parents aware of the ATA and its role in assisting with consumer protection. The NSW Department of Education will also be giving advice to parents through its online magazine called ezine). In its advice the Department will explore a range of issues facing parents who are making decisions about tuition. The ATA will be strongly referenced in the ezine.

Sticker availability

The ATA has stickers available for car bumpers and for windows of premises. All new members received two such stickers upon acceptance of membership. Additional stickers can be purchased from \$1 each from the office.

Back Issues of the Newsletter

Previous issues of the ATA newsletter are available upon request. We now have nearly 4 years of quarterly newsletters which cover a huge range of issues relevant to the tutoring industry domestically.

Moreover, they can be downloaded from the ATA website: www.ata.edu.au.