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## A decade of working towards boosting standards

In March 2015 the Australian Tutoring Association (ATA) turned ten years old! This is a significant milestone and one of which all members should be proud. Some members have a membership number that begins with 2005 having supported the peak body for the ten years. Other organisations, such as Kip McGrath Education Centres, Aldon Tutoring Centres, Numberworks'nWords and Nam Quang Tuition have also made it a policy to support the ATA - which has mutual benefit.

Kip McGrath Education Centres (KMEC) deserves special mention. This organisation lent the ATA the funds required in order to set up the original Association. Support from Kip (the former KMEC CEO) and Storm (the current KMEC CEO) has been foremost in this organisation's thinking about the ATA and about tutoring standards both nationally and internationally.

In ten years much is achieved. The most significant events to date are listed in the table below. Of course, the most significant event yet may be just about to happen with the ATA application to set up a charity currently before the Australian Charities and Non-profit Commission (ACNC).

## Important news

Whilst celebrating domestic success we need to consider the situation of our colleagues in Turkey. In the latter part of this year the decree shutting down private tutoring centres (called '*dershane*') comes into effect. Tutoring centres were given a choice to either shut down completely or transform into private schools. More can be read about in the International News section.

Outright bans do not work and we support our colleagues in their opposition to the ban. In Egypt where an outright ban was implemented, the growth in the black market led to a need to overturn the ban.

In our view the best way to deal with the growth of private tutoring is to first recognise it and then create a dialogue between the mainstream educational sector, the private tutoring centres (via their peak body) and parents in order to better understand what is driving the growth and how all the parties can work together in the interests of students.

Year	Significant events
2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ ATA launched as an incorporated association under NSW law. This followed a request from the then NSW Education Minister Andrew Refshauge asking the sector to form a peak body for the purpose of self-regulating.</li> </ul>
2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The ATA settles its membership categories and creates a rudimentary website. The Code of Conduct is settled and by the end of the first year the first Committee is voted in by members, Mary O'Brien from Clever Kids being voted in as our first President.</li> </ul>
2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Over 75% of members vote in agreement to make the Association a Company Limited by Guarantee.</li> <li>■ The NSW Office of Fair Trading works with the ATA to issue a press release in regards to making informed choices when choosing a tutor.</li> </ul>
2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ An Even Start (AES) tutoring program launched by Federal government. Curriculum Corporation, the Administrator of AES work with ATA</li> <li>■ ATA has grown to 180 members nationally</li> </ul>
2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Membership grows to 311 members by years end, despite this being the year of the GFC.</li> <li>■ The ATA President, Chris Druett flies to the USA paid for by the ATA. He investigates the status of tutoring associations there and reports to the membership via the ATA newsletters that Industry-based Accreditation is the way forward. He notes also that the main tutoring associations in the US are based around college tuition (universities, vocational education and the last two-years of high school).</li> </ul>
2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ ATA gets its first offshore member: LCentral in Singapore.</li> <li>■ Membership grows to 356 by year's end. ATA CEO invited to deliver Keynote address to NTA National Conference in Louisville, Kentucky.</li> </ul>
2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ National Tutoring Survey launched – a world first!</li> <li>■ The ATA is in the NSW Department of Education E-Zine and is also quoted extensively by Darragh O'Keefe in the article "A Private Practice" for the Australian College of Educators national newsletter, <i>Education Review</i>.</li> <li>■ 361 members nationally by year's end</li> </ul>
2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ NTA Conference, Scottsdale Arizona, ATA wins Excellence in Research Award for its National Tutoring Survey.</li> <li>■ 416 members nationally by year's end</li> <li>■ Tutordocor Canada join the ATA as offshore members</li> </ul>

2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ ATA helps design The Tutors Association (TTA) in the UK at the request of the UK.</li> <li>■ Meeting in Greece of national bodies from Cyprus, Greece, Turkey, Germany, USA, Australia and UK agree to follow Australia's lead and agree to found the Global Professional Tutors Association (GPTA). The ATA is asked to lead this push as the idea and impetus came from the ATA. The Greek EOFE (peak tutoring body) contributes 800 Euros to the cost of the trip.</li> </ul>
2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ ATA reduces its carbon footprint by moving to an online system, shifting to electronic payments, sending newsletters via email and communicating via email and social media</li> <li>■ Shift insurance to AON, ending a 4-year association with AAMI</li> <li>■ Accreditation in Australia launched</li> <li>■ Vote to become a non-profit entity having been a not-for-profit entity. The legal difference is subtle but allows the ATA to apply for charitable status.</li> <li>■ ATA properly engages with social media, using Facebook, Twitter and setting up a YouTube channel</li> <li>■ Membership passes 600 for the first time</li> </ul>
2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Accreditation included in membership fee. ATA reapplies for charitable status through a subsidiary entity created to distribute scholarships should the application succeed.</li> <li>■ ATA quoted in Good Weekend article by Anna Broinowski and also through Tony Jones interview on Lateline regarding Selective schools and testing</li> </ul>

## Charity update

The ACNC declined the ATA request for charitable status on the grounds that, though a charitable fund would be meritorious, the sole purpose of the ATA is not for the advancement of education as it is a peak body with member benefits and has a history of lobbying for members and doing other things.

The ATA has therefore had to set up a new company solely for the purpose of administering a charity should it be approved. The new company has been set up solely for charitable purposes and hopefully it will be granted ACNC approval. This is currently being considered.

## Conflict resolution and the peak body

From time to time complaints come to the ATA Office from members of the public. So far this year we have had three complaints – two against one business member and one against a non-member who is using the ATA logo.

In the first instance when a complaint comes to the ATA Office the protocol is to ask the complainant to complete an ATA Complaints Form so that the complaint is put in writing. In the process specific reference to which sections of the ATA Code are in question is detailed. After this step we then approach the business or tutor involved and ask them for their version of events. The CAC does not convene until after the business has been given a chance to put a case.

## The CAC Process

The CAC will look at the complaint and any evidence provided by the complainant. It will then look at the member's evidence, including any evidence of how it followed the ATA Code of Conduct in the way the conflict was handled. The CAC looks for clear evidence of how/whether the complaints procedures detailed in the ATA Code of Conduct were followed. Each member should familiarise themselves with the Complaints Procedures as each member is bound to.

If a member opts to dismiss the authority of the ATA then it essentially forfeits its rights to membership, as the ATA Code of Conduct is what gives the public confidence in ATA membership. This is an important point for members to understand.

Note also that the NSW government via the NSW Office of Fair Trading annually between 2007 and 2014 issued press releases encouraging members of the public to only choose ATA members when opting for a tutor. They refer to the ATA Code of Conduct in each Press Release.

This year the complaints brought to us against the member were phone referred by the OFT. In phone calls the OFT

has said the first step in conflict resolution is self-help, the second step is via the industry body and the third step is proceedings through the OFT. In one case the ATA phone number was actually given by the OFT to the complainant.

The ATA takes its role seriously in regards to consumer protection and all members need to be aware that the peak body acts to protect the legitimate interests of consumers as much as it acts to protect the legitimate interests of members. It also recognises that in the consumer-business relationship, generally consumers are the more vulnerable. This will be taken into account by the CAC when hearing complaints.

The ATA takes a precautionary approach as stated in previous newsletters. This means that where in the view of the ATA Board the complainant is seriously aggrieved and can show supporting evidence then in the absence of evidence from the member or a refusal to comply with a request for information, the Board must find in favour of the complainant. To do otherwise would be against the messages and stance of the ATA as stated by Board members in newsletters since the ATA's inception.

The ATA may also support the complainant to formalise a complaint via the various consumer protection bodies.

## Accreditation

Accreditation became a part of membership at the start of the calendar year. Members are given provisional accreditation upon application for membership and will be granted accreditation upon completion of the accreditation process. Insurance with AON will become available to members at the most discounted rates only upon full accreditation.

## Premium membership

At the request of members at last year's AGM, the idea of a premium membership was raised. It has been considered and the ATA Board will deliberate at its next meeting. Essentially the question is whether an organisation can be accredited and if so, how that would be done.



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# NEUROFEEDBACK TRAINING IN CHILDREN

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This research is being conducted by Associate Professor Jim Lagopoulos and Miss Eleana Papagiannopoulou.

**If you would like more information regarding this study or are interested in participating, please contact:**

Eleana Papagiannopoulou  
E [eleni.papagiannopoulou@sydney.edu.au](mailto:eleni.papagiannopoulou@sydney.edu.au)  
T +61 2 9114 4003

For more information head to  
[sydney.edu.au/bmri](http://sydney.edu.au/bmri)

## ATA in the Press

Australian Broadcasting Corporation

Broadcast: 12/03/2015

**Reporter Tony Jones is joined by the CEO of the Australian Tutoring Association, Mohan Dhall to discuss the intensive coaching.**

### Transcript

TONY JONES, PRESENTER: How much of an advantage does coaching give students? For his view, I'm joined now by the CEO of the Australian Tutoring Association, Mohan Dhall.

MOHAN DHALL, CEO, AUSTRALIAN TUTORING ASSOCIATION: Good evening.

TONY JONES: Thanks for being here. Now the Department of Education doesn't endorse it, but I'm wondering how hard it would be to get into a selective school without doing private coaching or tutoring in those kind of private colleges.

MOHAN DHALL: OK. A child doesn't need to have coaching in a private college in order to get into a selective high school. However, it would be an advantage to get some form of - to do some sort of preparation, coaching or tutoring.

TONY JONES: Yes. How much of an advantage? We know - you look at these colleges and they have all the lists of the kids who got in in the previous year, obviously encouraging those in the next year to think they could be on that list. So how much of an advantage do you think it actually is?

MOHAN DHALL: I think it's necessary that all children have exposure to an instrument that would look like the test. That would reduce stress and it would also give students an opportunity to practice the question types they might face. So I think even children not going to a coaching college would have to have exposure to the test-type instruments.

TONY JONES: To practice doing the tests?

MOHAN DHALL: Yeah, of course, yeah. To familiarise themselves and also to reduce stress so there's no anxiety just being confronted by something they haven't seen before.

TONY JONES: Well you mentioned stress, so I'll pick you up on that. I mean, some of these kids are doing 10 hours a week - that's for hours of homework related to the six hours they do. Some are doing more. Anecdotally you hear of kids doing 20 hours of private tutoring in an effort to get into a selective school. Have you heard anecdotally of kids just not being able to handle that or burning out?

MOHAN DHALL: We've actually been requested - I have personally been requested by parents to take on kids who I know will not get into a selective school and have had to turn them away. So really, the question then is: if a child is going to be stressed and it's inappropriate for them to be doing the test, of those 13,100, how many of them are being told by selective preparation teachers that their child won't make it and therefore it's more realistic for them to change their expectations around that?

TONY JONES: You think there should be fewer people taking the test - is that what you're suggesting?

MOHAN DHALL: Or there should be greater disclosure around the statistics around success if success is measured by those who get in.

TONY JONES: If two kids of equal intelligence took the test, but one was doing private coaching and the other one wasn't, who do you think would get in?

MOHAN DHALL: If the one who wasn't was exposed to the test and had very minimal guidance around how to answer test-type instruments, they could both potentially get in. So the question then is: how much coaching is too much? And this is a question that should be asked.

TONY JONES: Yes. What's the answer?

MOHAN DHALL: It depends on stress levels, it depends on cost, but it also depends on educational authorities - this

includes unions, parent groups, principals' associations and tutors having a dialogue. To simply stand on the outside and say, "This is too much," or even for the Department of Education to assert that they don't recommend tutoring - I've had bureaucrats tell me in the Department of Education that their children get tutoring and coaching. So, one side, there's a public face and there's a private disclosure. So I think we better - it would be better for us to be more honest and then face the issues head on rather than pretend it doesn't exist.

TONY JONES: Well, indeed, 'cause it clearly exists and in very large numbers now. The department seems to think that you can't actually coach children to do well in key parts of the test. I'm thinking of the general ability section of the test, which is around patterns and how you interpret those patterns and so on. It is numerical to some degree, but it's a lot to do with pattern identification. Can you teach kids how to pass a test like that or how to do well in a test like that?

MOHAN DHALL: OK, you can certainly teach kids how to recognise certain question types and therefore have strategies around answering those. The question is really one about IQ. If those tests look at the immutable part of IQ, then the argument according to psychologists is: no, you can't. Nevertheless, if you reduce stress and provide strategies, those who can will be able to. So, it's much - one or the other. Having exposure doesn't harm, and at least if a child knows where their strengths and weaknesses are, they can spend time working on weaknesses while they get affirmation from their strengths.

TONY JONES: What do you think about the inequity here. I mean, if you can - I mean, it's - obviously it's not necessarily rich people who are putting their kids through this. A lot of them are struggling to find the \$7,000 a year or whatever it is for this kind of coaching. But it still means that those people at the lower end of the spectrum who can't afford coaching or don't know about it, even if they have very gifted children, they've got less chance of making it into selective schools. Do you worry about that?

MOHAN DHALL: Yes, I do. The equity issue is huge. If you look on the Department of Education's website, they have three old papers badged as new with the 2014 logo from the new name of the department on it. We've been saying annually that ACER, a private company with proprietary rights over this material, should release tests annually so that kids all over the state can freely download them and therefore you can take away that element of bias coming because people can afford to have a private tutor who perhaps creates their own resources. More than that, we would also say that the releasing of tests would also lead to more robust testing.

TONY JONES: Why don't they release tests? I mean, if the private colleges can get these tests, why can't ordinary folk get them?

MOHAN DHALL: Well the private colleges don't get these tests; they create their own based on similar test-type instruments, questions that they hear from kids they've done. It seems to me for every single public exam, if BOSTES can release their prior HSCS and everyone can prepare for them, then every single public test should be open to scrutiny and should be freely available to all kids everywhere and that would take out that element.

TONY JONES: What do you think about the other argument that's being made when people hear that the system - well, some people say the system's being rorted a little bit by these private colleges and so they should actually get rid of selective schools altogether and just actually try and raise the standard of ordinary schools and keep the smart or the gifted children in there working alongside less gifted children so that everyone lifts their standard? What do you think about that?

MOHAN DHALL: OK. So, we're saying they're mutually exclusive. You can't have a selective system and bright kids in another system. It seems to me if you draw kids out of a system, you do two things. You can push the higher end, which boosts educational standards all round, as we've seen from James Ruse and other schools. We also can see that then gives room for others to grow and do well and you get first in the state in every subject from schools not just that are James Ruse and it allows those children to flourish. When expectations rise in a high expectations environment, you get good outcomes, regardless of whether there's a selective stream or not.

TONY JONES: Mohan Dhall, a lot of people interested in this topic. We thank you very much for coming in to talk about that tonight.

MOHAN DHALL: Thank you very much.

TONY JONES: And 11-year-old Om Sen sat the selective schools test today at Fort Street High in Sydney. He was happy with how he went, although in his view, the maths test was pretty hard. A number of students sitting that test were reportedly in tears. Who could blame them?

Source: <http://www.abc.net.au/lateline/content/2015/s4196750.htm>

## International news

### News from Turkey

Private tutoring centres in Turkey, called *dershanes*, will be shut down on September 1, 2015. The new law gives *dershanes* the right to transform into private schools in 4 years until 2019. *Dershanes* which are willing to transform will have to transform to private schools, and those that do not will be shut down completely. The main opposition party applied for an annulment action for the new law that was passed in the parliament with the will and the support of the government; yet, the High Court still has not decided on a ruling and the verdict is late. For that reason, a significant number of *dershanes* started their transformation processes into private schools.

Out of 3,650 *dershanes* in the country, around 2,000 of them applied for the transformation. The rest have not decided yet. Institutions for tutoring on different subjects continue their tutoring activities. The new law also established an age limit for the supplementary tutoring centres. Students who are older than 12 years of age are not able to apply for these centres.

The new law upset both the students and the parents. It was the desire of parents and students to attend school and have tutoring as a supplement; yet, the new law deemed this impossible.

We project that in order to fulfill this (tutoring) need, the number of illegal tutoring centres will increase. The closure of *dershanes* while the need continues will lead the industry towards illegal ways. [That is, a black market will develop as a result of the ban]. Overall, there has been chaos and confusion in private education sector in Turkey this year.

### İBRAHİM TAŞEL

Head of Committee and Member of ITO (Istanbul Chamber of Commerce)

President of TODER (All Private Education Institutions Association)

CEO of Final Education Institutions

## National Tutoring Association, NTA (USA)

### NTA Annual Conference 2016 - Now Accepting Presentation Proposals

The Officers, Board of Directors and Members of the National Tutoring Association (NTA) invite you to submit proposals for our Annual Conference to be held at the Grand Hyatt in Tampa, Florida April 1st through April 6th, 2016. We ask you to join your colleagues in an exchange of ideas and expertise in tutoring. We welcome proposals that expand the discipline in all areas regarding: recruiting, training, and retaining tutors; current trends in practice and research; use of technology; understanding the law; tutoring special populations; online tutoring; grant writing; learning preferences; improving tutorial leadership for directors and coordinators; conflict management; building and marketing private or community programs; basic nuts and bolts of tutoring; and motivating students. New for 2016 - discounted registration fees for early presenter registrations! Send your proposals by December 30, 2015. Forms can be found [here](http://www.ntatutor.com/conference-presentation-proposal-form.html).

(<http://www.ntatutor.com/conference-presentation-proposal-form.html>)

## German News from VNN

### *In Germany we have two important topics these days:*

Firstly, the two big private tutoring chains in Germany, which have about, 000 sites/schools and each has for the past couple of years been owned by hedge funds. These funds pump lots of money into the companies to initiate a course of expansion. The small operators, such as the owner-managers feel like we are pressed to the wall. We don't have that much money to counter that strategy. Our main and most important aim must be to create a new brand such as "Quality in VNN-schools". That means us, the owner-managers, must move closer together.

Secondly, there is an issue with is the assignment of ownership the private tutoring schools. Some of us are older and want to retire whilst others just have no further desire to manage a school because of the present market situation. One of the big chains likes to buy such schools - but also some smaller chains buy them to get bigger.

The owner –managers mostly do not know what value their school has and do not like to sell to a big chain. Within the VNN we try to bring sellers and buyer together so that all parties are happier.

This is the current news from the German Nachhilfe-Market.

Best wishes to all Australian colleagues from Germany.

Cornelia Sussieck

(VNN e.V.)

## 11 Years as a Private Tutor – Lynette McLenaghan

I have been a member of the Australian Tutoring Association (ATA) almost from its inception and have been running a tutoring service for the past ten years. I work as a sole operator from a purpose built, self-contained studio at my residence. I considered expanding the service, employing then training other tutors to work for me. This option was initially considered because the number of students I could tutor was limited and I was receiving many enquiries for tuition of other subjects or home visits. I didn't follow up with this possibility as this would have taken me more into an administrative role. At the time I was still teaching in the classroom and enjoyed teaching both in schools and privately. I also found working with other teachers stimulating and the latter role didn't depend on me administering every feature of the service.

As an English teacher much of the tuition I provide to students involves close analysis of fiction and non-fiction texts. I also relish engaging with texts and teaching students how to move beyond literal interpretations to more complex understanding of texts as well as developing an appreciation of literature. I have found that once students begin understanding the subtext they read and study they are more able to produce more sophisticated written pieces and responses.

One of the highlights of tutoring is that a number of new clients are siblings, cousins and friends. A recent highlight was when a new client informed me that the teacher of a prestigious school wrote my name on the board and that of another tutor and stated that we were the providers he recommended to his year 12 cohort. Meeting other tutors has helped make this work more meaningful because I don't see them as competition, but as colleagues.

Being a sole operator can sometimes feel like working in isolation. Some facets of the service have not worked so well and therefore have been either abandoned or modified. About five years ago I created a range of resources for VCE students that addressed the three areas of study for VCE English. Although students purchased these resources they struggled to use them without tutor supervision and input. Similarly, many students bring resources to the tutoring session that they have purchased or from school and are unable to use without tutoring assistance. Another important facet of this work is to show and teach students how to summarise and note take from resources they use.

From time to time I find myself in conversation with people who tell me about providers who run classes with groups from six to double figures. These providers are almost always Math and Science tutors and these subjects are more likely to lend themselves to instructional style lessons. Unfortunately, in my experience this cannot be so easily replicated for English.

Over eleven years of tutoring clients I am often asked to mark essays. In my first year I provided this service free, but found it was expected and under-appreciated. When I applied a pre-paid service there was less demand and people who paid for this service were appreciative of this facet of my work. To keep up with modern practices I also offer an online service, which is also pre-paid.

The main strength of providing a one-on-one service is that students respond well to this level of assistance. Clients who would otherwise be passive towards their studies usually develop the habit of becoming more responsible for, and taking more initiative with, school requirements. One of the huge advantages of tutoring students is that the quality of the lesson isn't hindered by classroom distractions. As a teacher my strengths and skills are better utilised teaching one-on-one than in a classroom.

I moved out of the classroom over two years ago to write fiction and become a self-published author. This endeavour evolved from tutoring and primarily the close analysis of text.

I used to have a tutoring website, but this vanished when the provider was on-sold a number of times.

Operating my tutoring business, whilst being rewarding has been proved a huge learning curve. Some of the less desirable elements of this work have been:

At times, unreasonable demands, the most common is the expectation of extra time outside the session, sometimes when the next client is waiting.

Although my terms and conditions are in writing and these are emailed to all clients ahead of the first session some clients initially accept my terms, but then want to dispute them at a later stage.

The majority of difficulties I encounter are with parents rather than from students. I have found from personal experience parental expectation sometimes exceeds my brief and the parameters of tutoring.

#### **Within Tuition Editor**

Mohan Dhall  
Email [mdhall@ata.edu.au](mailto:mdhall@ata.edu.au)  
Phone 02 9704 5724  
Mobile 0408 619 714  
Fax 02 9744 0519

#### **Contacting Us**

For contributions and comments please Email the ATA  
[office@ata.edu.au](mailto:office@ata.edu.au)  
**Australian Tutoring Association (ATA) Ltd.**  
PO.Box 256, Croydon NSW 2132