Message from the Director

The year of the dragon is said to be the year of ‘innovative ideas and big projects.’ For IDP: IELTS Australia this means continuing to widen our network of testing locations around the world, it also means we will be delivering even more support services to test takers and to organisations who trust IELTS for high-stakes English language testing.

In 2011, over 1.7million IELTS tests were delivered marking yet another year of growth for IELTS and representing a 12% increase on 2010. The most significant growth in 2011 came from the USA, Canada, the Middle East and India. The sustained growth in the use of IELTS comes from its popularity with people preparing to study abroad, the substantial growth in recognition of IELTS amongst professional registration organisations (e.g. in medicine, nursing, engineering, accounting and teaching) and it’s increased use by employers around the world.

In this issue we are pleased to report on the continuing success of the IELTS Masterclass which has recently travelled across 10 cities in India where it drew huge crowds of enthusiastic future test takers. IELTS Masterclasses have also been held in Sydney and Melbourne with Brisbane to follow shortly. This free, 90-minute class was introduced by IDP: IELTS Australia late last year to help test takers improve their understanding of the IELTS test requirements and assessment criteria. Another key aim of the class is to encourage test takers to take a long term approach to improving their English skills through practice and through English language classes.

This edition features the first instalment of a new ‘Who’s who of IELTS’ feature. We also celebrate Marcia Caswell’s 10 year milestone with DP: IELTS Australia and take a closer look at her role as Audit and Investigation Manager. We’d like to make our readers the subject of future editions of this feature. If you are keen to share your story or suggest a colleague to feature in upcoming editions, please let us know!

Best wishes

John Belleville
IELTS Director, IDP: IELTS Australia

IELTS support for your institution can be found at www.idp.com/ielts.aspx
IDP:IELTS Australia recently launched the IELTS Masterclass to deliver practical advice to test takers about how to improve their English and avoid common test-taking mistakes. The Masterclass also provides an opportunity for test takers to look at sample answers alongside the IELTS assessment criteria (known as IELTS band descriptors) in order to better understand the precise language skills examiners are looking for. Importantly, the class delivers a strong message that language acquisition is a long-term process and that test takers should make every effort to use their English everyday in order to improve. There are no easy fixes!

Masterclasses have been held in Melbourne and Sydney, while in January, presenter Andrew Thomas took the IELTS Masterclass Roadshow to India. Andrew admitted to being taken aback at the size of the audiences, with over 550 participants in Amritsar in the Punjab and 350 in Kochi, southern India.

Andrew emphasised that practising sample tests helps candidates learn what is expected in each part of the test and the necessary test preparation to maximise the skills candidates already have. However, specific IELTS preparation has to go hand-in-hand with regular use of English in everyday contexts: speaking with friends, reading newspaper articles in English, and watching English-language films and TV programs.

The tight schedule in India ran smoothly, with the exception of a few minor transport challenges. For example, flights from Chandigarh to Delhi were grounded because of fog and yet this didn’t prevent the team from making it to the next Masterclass. “Remarkably,” says Andrew, “within 45 minutes of the flight cancellation, we were in a car at the start of a seven-hour crawl through a dense ‘pea-soup’ all the way to Delhi!” Andrew was full of praise for the IDP:IELTS India staff, Vishal Gupta - National Operations Manager & IELTS Administrator, Inderpreet Singh - Area Manager, and all the staff at the branch offices.

Details of forthcoming IELTS Masterclass events in Australia, Singapore, Vietnam and Indonesia are available at IELTSSessentials.com/masterclass
Who’s who of IELTS - Marcia Caswell, Audit and Investigation Manager

Having just reached her 10 years milestone at IDP: IELTS Australia, there is not much Marcia Caswell hasn’t done when it comes to IELTS. Over the past decade, she has worked in the IELTS Australia regional management team supervising the test centre network, presented IELTS Explained sessions to stakeholders, administered the IDP: IELTS Australia research program, managed examiners, clerical markers and EORs and audited test centres.

“The only thing I haven’t done is sit the test!” Marcia says with a laugh. Following a brief celebration of her 10 year milestone, Marcia left the country to conduct audits at test centres in South America.

“All test centres are audited every two years and in addition we perform cross partner audits. In 2011, I undertook 20 audits.”

Marcia has filled almost two passports with stamps working her way through South East Asia, Canada, South America, Africa and New Zealand. While this may sound glamorous, Marcia is quick to point out her role is certainly no holiday.

“It does sound great but it’s actually really hard work. You often only see the sights between the airport, hotel and test centre.”

Marcia has learnt two important lessons on travel from her role - always be at the right place at the right time and pack a change of clothes in your hand luggage. Despite clocking up thousands of miles around the world, Marcia has luckily only ever had her bag misplaced once - ironically on one of her shortest trips of all, to the CLESOL conference in New Zealand.

“I really like the audit part because you’re out there dealing with people face to face, and then I really like the investigative work because I like a bit of a puzzle, sorting it out logically, collecting evidence and you get to use your imagination a bit as well.”

The other great highlight of working for IDP Marcia said was the global nature of the company and she has gained great pleasure from getting to work with so many different people.

“It’s wonderful to be able to get out to the IDP offices and put faces to so many of names across our network.”

If you are interested in being profiled or giving your organisation or test centre a moment in the spotlight, contact Bethany at ielts.communications@idp.com.

Tell us your story and feature in the IELTS ‘Who’s Who’

Each month, Expressions will feature a profile of a professional who works with English language testing - be it in an admissions or recruitment role, in a test centre, within teaching or as an examiner.

Is your institution protected against document fraud?

We encourage all organisations which accept IELTS test scores to use the Test Report Form Verification Services (TRFVS) to validate every Test Report Form received from applicants. If your school or organisation is not yet signed-up to use this free service, you can register at www.ielts.org/TRF or contact the IELTS Australia stakeholder relations team for additional information. When your organisation signs up for this service, you will receive password-protected access to the verification website where you can quickly and easily authenticate IELTS test scores.

Free electronic score downloads are also available to any institution currently registered to use the Test Report Form Verification Service. Step-by-step instructions for retrieving IELTS scores electronically are below:
Step 1: Log in at www.ielts.org/TRF using the e-mail address you provided on your application form and the password.

Step 2: Click on “Download Results” from the menu on the left.

Step 3: Specify a date range for the results you want to retrieve, which must include the date the test was taken.

Step 4: Choose the format you want your results displayed, either XML or CSV (Please note: candidate photos are only available when you select XML format).

Step 5: Click “Submit” to view a list of all test results that were sent to your institution within the specified date range.

Preview each step at TRF Verification and Electronic Score Download Website Demo (https://ielts.ucles.org.uk/ielts-trf/demo.html).

Working collaboratively in India to support international talent

Ask any English language teacher in India about IELTS and they are likely to tell you that references to IELTS adorn hundreds of buildings where students take English classes and wherever students seek advice from locally-based international education advisers.

IDP’s team in India work collaboratively with international education advisers to ensure that prospective international students from across India can conveniently book into a test venue close to their home town.

“The vastness of India means that considerable travel to the closest test venue is often part of the experience for IELTS test takers and it is important that test takers are provided with a local support in this vital step towards achieving admission to an international education. IDP IELTS test centres are located in 28 major cities of India and our staff pride themselves on the customer service they provide to test takers who come from all over India to have their skills in English language assessed,” explains Vishal Gupta, National Operations Manager & IELTS Administrator.

“We work with a large network of education advisers that have demonstrated they operate a high quality service for students who aspire to study abroad. At the end of 2011 we recognised these collaborative relationships with a gala dinner and awards.”

During this event, the network of international education advisers were updated on the latest support available for IELTS test takers including the new global website (IELTessentials.com) and IELTS Masterclass initiative.

All participants enjoyed the event very much and reported that they were appreciative of the recognition given by IDP Education in this way.
2012 research grants awarded

Two groups of Australian academics will undertake IELTS related research this year after being granted funding as part of the IDP: IELTS Australia research program.

The program, which is part of a wider IELTS joint-funded scheme, aims to support the worldwide demand for new English language testing insights. The first research study will be undertaken by Dr. Jill Murray (Macquarie University), Associate Professor Ken Cruickshank (Sydney University) and Dr. Judie Cross (Randwick TAFE NSW Sydney Institute) in agreement with Macquarie University in New South Wales.

The project, 'Stakeholder perceptions of IELTS as a gateway to the professional workplace: the case of employers of overseas trained teachers', will aim to enhance understanding of the use and interpretation of IELTS scores by examining perceptions of employers in Australia and New Zealand.

The second grant has been awarded to Dr. Tim Moore (Swinburne University of Technology), Janne Morton (The University of Melbourne) and Chris Wallis (Swinburne College) through an agreement with Swinburne University of Technology in Victoria.

Their project, 'Literacy practices in the professional workplace: Implications for the IELTS General Training Reading and Writing tests', will investigate literacy practices in a range of professional workplace settings, and consider the implications these have for the design of the Reading and Writing components of the IELTS General Training test.

John Belleville, IELTS Australia Director, congratulated the recipients on the quality of their proposals and noted the intrinsic value of ongoing research. “This research program reflects our commitment to being at the forefront of English language testing.

“Outcomes from these research studies will ensure the test remains relevant and useful to a wide range of stakeholders, including employers,” Mr Belleville said.

Once complete, this independent academic research is published in IELTS Research Reports. IELTS has produced 12 volumes to date, and these are available in hard copy or online, with Volume 13 to be released soon.

Apply for a research grant

Applications for the 2013 program are now open with proposals to be submitted by June 30, 2012. Researchers and institutions with expertise in language learning and assessment are invited to apply for the funding to undertake IELTS-related research projects.

For grant application forms and guidelines for applying visit www.ielts.org/researchers

A Passport to Study - an IDP and Times Higher Education joint-publication

As part of IDP’s global partnership with the Times Higher Education in the UK, IDP has produced ‘A Passport to study’, a 16-page international education supplement in collaboration with Times Higher Education editorial team.

The supplement explores the dynamic of global international education; including the challenges and opportunities that are inherent within the industry, the emphasis that universities are placing on internationalization and, importantly, the respective influences on students as consumers of international education. Over 35,000 copies were distributed both in print and to online subscribers, including distribution to delegates at the Going Global conference this month. The supplement can also be download at: www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/hybrid.asp?typeCode=606&pubCode=1&navcode=188

English Australia appoints new Chair

IDP: IELTS Australia congratulates Chris Wallis on her recent appointment as Chair of English Australia. Chris, who by day is the Director of Swinburne College, is also currently undertaking an IELTS research project as part of the 2012 IELTS Joint Funded Academic Research Program.
Events and sponsorship update

IDP: IELTS Australia staff attended the International Higher Education Conference held at Docklands, Melbourne recently.

The conference brought together a number of senior representatives in the international education arena with Deputy Vice-Chancellors, International Office Directors, migration experts and senior government officials in attendance.

The theme of the conference was Managing Risk to Ensure Sustainable Growth in the International Sector and delegates used the opportunity to discuss changes post the Knight Review and share strategies in developing internal risk assessment frameworks within each of their institutions. Speakers included Professor Monique Skidmore, Pro Vice-Chancellor International and Major Projects from the University of Canberra; Peter Speldewinde, Assistant Secretary Migration and Visa Policy Division Department of Immigration and Citizenship; Robin Buckham, Deputy Vice-Chancellor International and Development, Deakin University and Professor Lesleyanne Hawthorne, Associate Dean International, University of Melbourne.

IDP: IELTS Australia Director John Belleville presented on the subject of Managing Risk and Ensuring Quality Student Outcomes Through English Language Testing. The presentation outlined ways in which IELTS can help institutions to manage risk due to the test’s proven, reliable and independent nature and relying on the multilayered security systems which are in place, from test day through to the release of results and verification by the institution.

Information packs and copies of the IELTS Scores Explained DVD were distributed to help delegates with standard setting and revision at their organisation.

Brain teaser solution

An anagram of wolf is fowl, a homonym of fowl is foul, an antonym of foul is fair, a homonym of fair is fare, and an anagram of fare is fear.

Is there something - a story, information or even a question - you would like to see featured in Expressions: The IELTS Newsletter? Email your suggestions or feedback to ielts.communications@idp.com