The Board of Directors
Ci: Dr Tom Stubbs
Chair
Education Services Australia
PO Box 177
CARLTON SOUTH VIC 3053

EDUCATION SERVICES AUSTRALIA
LETTER OF EXPECTATION
JULY 2012 – JUNE 2014

Dear Dr Stubbs,

I am writing on behalf of the Standing Council on School Education and Early Childhood (SCSEE), as company owners, to set out the priorities and expectations for Education Services Australia (ESA) for the 2012-13 and 2013-14 financial years.

Purpose

This Letter of Expectation is an agreement between SCSEE and ESA. It outlines the roles and responsibilities of ESA and sets out the high-level performance expectations and strategic priorities. It will be reviewed biennially and updated, as required.

This Letter of Expectation should inform the development of ESA’s corporate and strategic planning. All annual reporting from ESA should be consistent with this letter.

Context

Consistent with the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians, all Australian governments, with non-government education authorities and providers, are working towards a world class education system in Australia. Improving educational outcomes by ensuring that all young Australians have access to high-quality schooling is central to the nation’s social and economic prosperity and will position young people to live fulfilling, productive and responsible lives.

The national education reforms include a commitment to develop and deliver an Australian Curriculum, promoting quality teaching and school leadership, strengthened accountability and transparency in school education, promoting equity in schooling for Indigenous Australians and rural and remote students, and increased collaboration between jurisdictions in realising the goals of the Melbourne Declaration. All Australian governments are undertaking initiatives to support the effective integration of Information & Communication Technologies (ICT) into teaching and learning.

Integral to these reforms are the ministerial companies and authorities that comprise the national school education architecture. The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) is developing the Australian Curriculum, implementing national frameworks for assessment, and reporting through the My School website. The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) has a leadership role in the teacher quality initiatives and the Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) is overseeing important changes to early childhood education and care and school age care in Australia. ESA has an important role in supporting the development and delivery of the reform agenda as a leading provider for the education and training sectors in Australia.
Principles

SCSEEC expects ESA to operate by the following five principles:

- **Innovation**: ESA should deliver high-quality and innovative products and services and creatively work, through innovative engagement models, to meet the requirements of the education sector in implementing the broader reform agenda.

- **Engagement**: SCSEEC expects ESA to engage closely with all jurisdictions and systems in the schools sector to ensure that ESA products and services directly meet owners’ needs.

- **Leveraging existing capital**: Wherever possible, ESA should work to leverage:
  - existing investment in resources, tools and infrastructure that is either owned nationally or by states or territories, and
  - existing knowledge, expertise and capacity in jurisdictions and the non-government education sector, where practical and mutually beneficial.

- **Efficiency**: Products and services should be cost-effective and delivered competitively.

- **Sustainability**: ESA should continue to build its capability to exist as a financially viable company into the future.

Priorities

As owners of ESA, SCSEEC expects that ESA will deliver products and services that directly meet the needs and requirements of all jurisdictions, systems and schools in the education sector. To ensure close alignment between required and provided services, SCSEEC requests that ESA engage closely with all education authorities and the companies that comprise the national education architecture to determine the sector’s requirements as consumers.

In providing support for national education initiatives it is envisaged that ESA will work in the four priority areas agreed under the ESA company objects, in line with the principles listed above. These are:

- researching, testing and developing effective and innovative ICT systems for education, in line with national eLearning initiatives,
- devising, developing and delivering curriculum and assessment, professional development and career and information support services, consistent with the work of ACARA, AITSL, states, territories and other key stakeholders,
- facilitating the pooling, sharing and distribution of knowledge, resources and services to support and promote eLearning, across jurisdictions, sectors and internationally, and
- ensuring access to quality assured systems and content and interoperability between individuals, entities and systems.

SCSEEC acknowledges that ESA will continue to offer services to higher education and to the vocational education and training sector, and will explore areas of intersection between these sectors and the school education sector.

SCSEEC notes that ESA has been engaged by a number of organisations, including the Australian Government, to undertake specific projects and activities to support the national education reform agenda as outlined below.

Support for teaching and learning

ESA is undertaking projects aligned to the national education reform agenda to:

- develop new digital learning resources with particular focus on resources for teaching English, mathematics, science, history, geography, languages and the arts in the new Australian Curriculum,
- support the assessment needs of teachers through the delivery of online assessment tools which assist teachers to access and use numeracy, literacy and science test items that are digitally linked to relevant curriculum and learning resources,
- support teachers by providing high-quality online professional learning resources that further their professional development, and
- support flexible delivery of language teaching and learning, including the development of an online Language Learning Space.

Technical infrastructure

ESA is undertaking projects aligned to the national education reform agenda to:

- support sharing of digital resources between jurisdictions by hosting and maintaining the National Digital Learning Resources Network (NDLRN) through improvements to the technical infrastructure for storage, distribution, discovery and accessibility of digital resources,
- work with government and non-government schools' authorities to link the Australian Curriculum to existing digital resources with improved online search and delivery capabilities so teachers can easily find quality online teaching materials,
- work with ACARA on the development and phased introduction of the new National Assessment Program for Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) tests and delivery platforms, and
- facilitate communication and sharing across IT systems and providing advice on the technical aspects of eLearning.

Copyright

ESA has responsibility for maintaining licensing and copyright for the national collection and is also working with the publishing, digital content and creative industries to ensure, where possible, open access to educational resources through Creative Commons licensing arrangements.

Governance

Engagement

In the development and implementation of its projects and activities, SCSEEC considers it critical that ESA seek to engage collaboratively with and gain support from key stakeholders, including bodies such as ACARA, AITSL, state and territory government authorities, the non-government education sector and Australian Government authorities. Formal consultation mechanisms such as project steering groups and project reference groups should be employed for this engagement and collaboration. ESA should also engage with the National Schools Interoperability Program (NSIP) Steering Group, public organisations active in the eLearning and digital resources space, cultural agencies and universities, and the broader e-learning industry, including providers of digital tools, resources and infrastructure, where appropriate.

A strong collaborative approach to service delivery will have benefits for both ESA and all parts of the education system with whom it engages. While keeping national core teams tight, a more distributed and collaborative model of operation will improve information flows within the sector, enabling ESA to be aware of and responsive to the needs of the sector, while at the same time strengthening capacity in jurisdictions, systems and schools.

Reporting

SCSEEC asks that ESA prepare a program of work that builds on this Letter of Expectation and details ESA's proposed relationships, services and engagements in relation to all relevant work. SCSEEC asks that ESA report against its program of work at each SCSEEC meeting and that ESA consult with and be responsive to the Australian Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs Senior Officials Committee (AEEYSOC).
SCSEEC requests that ESA provide an Annual Report that outlines ESA’s activity during the preceding financial year and how the activities relate to this Letter. SCSEEC asks that this Annual Report specifically include:

- a report on consultation undertaken with states, territories and key education stakeholders regarding the sector’s requirements and activities undertaken to meet these requirements,
- detailed financial information,
- progress against the program of work, and
- potential opportunities to leverage and build on existing work led by other key stakeholders and possible future areas of work to pursue to support the national reform agenda, subject to agreement by the Australian Government and all states and territories.

SCSEEC asks that ESA also provide a separate version of the Annual Report for the ESA website that provides a high-level update on the strategic and financial positions of ESA and ESA’s work.

**Closing the Gap**

SCSEEC requests that ESA consider the Council of Australian Governments’ Closing the Gap targets in the delivery of products and services commissioned by SCSEEC, by ensuring these include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content and perspectives, where appropriate.

**Funding**

It is noted that ESA has effectively reduced its dependence on core fees as requested and that ESA’s purpose is to seek opportunities for commissioned work, as well as to provide products and services commercially.

It is expected that ESA will retain and build capacity to respond to market opportunities, as undertaken by SCSEEC, the Australian Government, state and territory governments, ACARA, AITSL, ACECQA or other key stakeholders.

**Conclusion**

SCSEEC notes the significant achievements of ESA to date in effectively supporting the national education reform agenda and looks forward to ESA’s reports on its operations in line with these expectations.

Yours sincerely,

[Signature]

The Hon. Adrian Piccoli MP
SCSEEC Chair