



## Association for Academic Language and Learning

### AALL Newsletter

### Volume 4, Issue 1: July, 2011

#### Feature: 'Dear Madman, I need helps!'

The end of a semester brings a moment for academic language and learning advisers to pause and reflect. After weeks of consultations and workshops for students, teachers may wonder if the referencing, synthesising and executive summary skills benefited anyone and if the hard work was worthwhile.

In *Teacher Man* (2005), Frank McCourt writes "Dream on, teacher, you will not be celebrated". McCourt's comment related to his own English teacher in Ireland who lived with the hope of making a differ-

ence in the life of just one student. Similarly dedicated language and learning advisers strive to help students overcome language barriers and learning differences in a new university culture. Considering the challenges many students face, successful results are cause for celebration.

An email urgently pleaded "Dear Madman" (madam?), "I need helps!" It was a panic attack with the due deadline hours away. The report written in dot points had no sign of paragraphs or topic sentences. "Lows" really meant 'laws'; and

'form' and 'from' along with 'dose' and 'does' were mixed up. Inconsistent word forms like 'difference' or 'different' and expressions like "the prices fall down" confused meaning. "Future more" and "In the last" were new transition phrases. The report content announced local industries had "high leakages" to support tourism development instead of "linkages". According to researchers (Sue and Frank 2005), the company had "brunch" in Byron Bay instead of a "branch" but "it was no big deal in the management team". Whether

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#### Editors' note



Hi everyone - once again, your contributions have given us yet another inspiring edition of the AALL Newsletter.

From the list of AALL events

(page 3), we can see how active our association has been. As Bronwyn notes in her President's Report (page 2), these events have made space for us to share our ideas and promote AALL in the wider university community. This is set to be bigger and better at the AALL Conference in Adelaide this November (page 6).

Congratulations to AALL members who have won awards, published articles or created new resources

this year (pages 5-7).

Finally we hope you enjoy our feature article (this page). We can all relate to it sometimes.

See you at the Conference and look forward to a post-Conference issue of the newsletter.

Jenny and Chad



#### In this newsletter

- LOTS OF REASONS TO ATTEND THE NOVEMBER CONFERENCE
- HUGE ACTIVITY IN STATE MEETINGS AND EVENTS
- NEWS ON AWARDS AND GRANTS
- EVEN MORE REASONS TO ATTEND THE CONFERENCE IN ADELAIDE

Plus... QR (beetag) codes: if you have the smartphone app, scan the code here to be taken straight to the AALL website!



#### Inside this issue:

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## AALL news: President's report



Bronwyn James, President, AALL

### AALL NEWS IN BRIEF:

- AALL HAS GROWN TO ALMOST 300 MEMBERS
- LOTS OF ACTIVITY IN STATE BRANCHES
- INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENT
- SEE YOU IN ADELAIDE!

It's about eighteen months since I wrote my first contribution to the newsletter as President and it's been an enjoyable time of working more closely with a great community of educators and scholars. In this report, I want to let you know about some changes in our membership and executive, a tiny bit about the conference because you'll find more in other parts of this newsletter, and check in with you about the direction AALL has been taking 2010-2012.

### We're growing and changing

AALL is growing and changing. We are now nearly 300 strong with most of our membership within Australia and some members from New Zealand, Vietnam and The UK. Welcome to our new members. Within the current executive, we have had some changes. Annie Bartlett has moved to Fiji. Annie has been the ACT representative and the web manager for some years and done a great job. Sage Leslie-McCarthy is now replacing Annie as the ACT representative until the end of 2011 and Janice White, from CDU, has been hard at work as our web manager for some months. Janet Counsell has moved from UTas to Latrobe and the new Tasmanian representative until the end of 2011 is Nicole Crawford. Thank you to both Annie and Janet – the Association is built on the work of its members and Executive. And welcome to Sage, Nicole and Janice. Within the next couple of months we will be asking the

membership to nominate and vote on AALL state and territory representatives for 2012-14.

### A great conference is only a few months away

The AALL conference is shaping up well thanks to the organising committee (see page 6). This year's conference is the result of collaboration between all of the South Australian universities - I'm sure that is a first for AALL!

### Checking in on the direction of AALL

At the beginning of 2011, I nominated three areas where I hoped to contribute to furthering the work of AALL. These were:

- to further develop mechanisms to share ideas, experiences, practices and research,
- to promote our expertise to the broader university community,
- to put effort into how we can demonstrate the impact of the work that we do.

The first two of these have largely been addressed through the AALL grants, particularly those targeted for collaborative AALL state/territory based events. (See AALL Events, next page). As well as an exchange of ideas among ALL educators, these events have been designed to promote wider institutional recognition that ALL educators are already working on the areas that have recently come into focus on the na-

tional higher education agendas (social inclusion, English language development etc.) and have something to offer in discussions of how to address these at the institutional level.

The events this year have definitely achieved these aims. I know of at least one event where the institution came on board in a very big way and offered further funding. If you were not able to make it to these events, you can access the audio-files and/or PPTS via links from the AALL site. It is also worthwhile checking the 2010 events and outcomes also available at <http://aall.org.au/forums/announcements-issues-resources/aall-meetings>

The third area of demonstrating the impact of what we do is both extremely important and frustratingly difficult. I recently put forward an application on behalf of AALL to ALTC for their final round of funds related to Promoting Disciplinary Networks. The gist of our application was the development of a framework that would enable us to demonstrate our impact in ways that our institutions would recognise. We were not successful – the feedback was that what we were proposing was important but not something that would promote a disciplinary network – fair enough but it was worth the effort and the framework idea is something that we might be able to get up in some other way.

At the moment, we are also

*Continued p. 7*

## Reports from AALL State Events

On 31 Jan 2011, WA ALL educators hosted a symposium entitled "Good Practice Principles: How do we know what they know?" This event was sponsored by AALL and provided an opportunity to discuss practical issues involved in implementing the Good Practice Principles in the context of an anticipated move to national Standards. Almost 50 participants from WA, Queensland and NSW participated.

Alex Barthel (pictured right), inaugural president of AALL, was the keynote speaker

### Introducing the British Written Academic English Corpus: enhancing our practice in improving student writing in the disciplines

UNSW hosted an AALL-sponsored day on Friday 20 May 2011 for over 40 academics and professional staff interested in enhancing our practice in improving students' writing in the disciplines.

Videos of Dr Sheena Gardner's presentation can be viewed at:

### Widening Participation in AALL: Developing Interactions Between Universities and the VET Sector

On Monday 18 April 2011, the South Australia branch of AALL hosted a forum at University of South Australia to explore the implications of more students entering university from TAFE/VET background and to develop opportunities for collaboration in research and practice

and Katie Dunworth (pictured right), Associate Professor and Director, International in the School of Education at Curtin University, gave the plenary. Both were on the AUQA Steering Committee that drafted standards for all students for consideration by DEEWR.

Participants at this event discussed three key concerns: how do we know whether students have sufficient English language skills to participate effectively in their studies upon entry to

<http://tv.unsw.edu.au/6D6DE1D1-8D76-11E0-A7FF0050568336DC>

### Critical Discussions About Social Inclusion Forum

The University of Wollongong held an AALL Forum on 10 June 2011. The event was a fantastic success, with excellent keynotes and very productive discussions around social inclusion.

Details of the event and resources are available on the AALL Forum.

between academic support staff in universities and TAFE/VET. Associate Professor Leesa Wheelahan was the keynote speaker, and delegates heard from local and interstate speakers on the current state of collaborations between the sectors.

university, how do we best help them to develop their language in an academic context throughout their studies, and how do we know that they are sufficiently proficient for graduate employment upon completion of their studies?

A summary and photos of the event, as well as recordings of the main speakers and their slides, can be found at <http://www.studentservices.uwa.edu.au/page/169199>

### English language entry pathways: innovations, outcomes and future directions

On Thursday 9 June 2011, over 130 representatives from English Language (EL) pathways and universities gathered at the University of Sydney for a one-day Symposium on English Language (EL) entry pathways. The Symposium aimed to explore the theme of whether EL entry pathways are effectively preparing international students for Higher Education (HE). The



Katie Dunworth and Alex Barthel, plenary and keynote speakers in Western Australia

Symposium connected this theme to the Australian Government's Good Practice Principles (GPP), specifically GPP 4 on EL entry pathways. Despite the emphasis on the Sydney region in the presentations, one of the strengths of the Symposium was the representative nature of the audience: people came from pathways and universities across Australia interested in addressing common issues.

A report on the proceedings and resources are available on the AALL Forum.



Associate Professor Leesa Wheelahan, from the LH Martin Institute at the University of Melbourne



David Rowland, Co-Editor, JALL

MEET STEPHEN, SAGE, ROWENA AND THUY (AS WELL AS LOTS OF OTHER AALL MEMBERS) AT THIS YEAR'S CONFERENCE IN ADELAIDE!



Sally Ashton-Hay, winner of US Department of Educational and Cultural Affairs Award

## Journal News

This year has seen a healthy growth in interest in the *Journal of Academic Language and Learning*. The current issue already has six published articles, including two significant review articles by Kate Chanock, as well as articles by Counsell, Green and Agosti, Ellis, and McNaught (who also features on p. 5). A further ten regular articles are at various stages of the review process. There is evidence of international interest in the

journal, with submissions having been received in recent months from Turkey, Malaysia, the U.S. and Iran.

We have also received over twenty articles for the conference special issue, to be published just after the conference, and Cally Guerin and Julia Miller from the University of Adelaide are acting as the special editors for that issue. For further information on the journal, please visit <http://journal.aall.org.au/>

[index.php/jall/index](http://index.php/jall/index)

The online system manages all submissions and the review process, so if you would like to be a reviewer for the journal, please register your interest. All articles are freely available and the journal also has a very useful search function.

All in all, 2011 is shaping up to be an interesting year of reading at JALL.

David Rowland, Co-Editor, JALL

## AALL Grants

Please join us in congratulating the following recipients of the latest round of AALL grants:

**Nicole Crawford (University of Tasmania), Lara McKenzie and Alison Jaquet (University of Western Australia)**

E-learning in context: Examining inequality and difference in students' use of online learning technologies

in a university-based outreach programme

**Tim Moore, Neomy Storch, Celia Thompson, Janne Morton (University of Melbourne); Andrew Johnson, Rosemary Cleehan (Monash University); Marianne Grey, Nancy Moncrieff (Swinburne University)**

Symposium and publication - Key thinkers, Key theories:

The contribution of theory to ALL practice

The committee this round included Kate Chanock, Julianne East, Alex Barthel, David Rowland and Bronwyn James. Further details about these grants will shortly be made available on the AALL website. We look forward to some excellent outcomes.

## News from ACT

This is Stephen writing - echoing a Human League song from some time ago. The Academic Skills and Learning Centre at the Australian National University has undergone a few staffing changes in 2011, the most significant being the retirement of long-standing ASLC director Annie Bartlett. Annie has chosen to abandon the fog, frost and cold of Canberra for a life on the beach in Fiji. For over a

decade Annie led ASLC and made an enormous contribution to the development of academic skills advising, locally and nationally. She's going to be missed. I applied for the director position and was appointed in April. Following that, Sage Leslie-McCarthy applied for and won the senior adviser position. In June, Thuy Do was made a continuing member of staff. Overall, we're looking forward to

settling down, catching our breath, and then taking on the future.

In August, Sage, with Rowena Harper, University of Canberra, will be hosting a professional development day on "Learning Technologies for ALL".

Expect more news and updates in the next newsletter, when Sage, as ACT ALL representative, will colour you amazed.

## Awards: Australian Learning and Teaching Council Citations

### Ms Siri Barrett-Lennard (UWA)

For leadership and innovation in improving international student engagement and success through the development of outstanding English language and academic skills programs.

### Ms Helen Drury (USyd)

For a decade of innovative online programs supporting student report writing in science and engineering.

### Ms Clare Power (UWS)

For facilitating enhanced learning experiences for students through visionary

leadership of an effective and innovative PASS program at the University of Western Sydney.

### Ms Liz Smith (CSU)

For sustained excellence and leadership in the support of students and their learning during their first year of university study.

### Ms Ingrid Wijeyewardene, tUNEup from Home Team (UNE)

For developing an innovative and equitable online program that leads students to independent mastery of their academic literacy.

### Dr Linda Li (UoC)

For supporting Higher Degree by Research (HDR) students in their journey towards successful thesis writing through respectful advising, empathetic guidance and development of productive writing habits.

### Pamela Martin-Lynch (Murdoch)

For significant commitment and contribution to student transition and retention through a creative, holistic, motivational and relational approach to teaching and learning support.

## Other Awards

### University of Adelaide 2010 Faculty of Sciences Excellence in Education Award

Dr Michelle Picard (Researcher Education and Development) won an award with two colleagues, Dr Kerry Wilkinson and Dr Michelle Wirthensohn from the School of Agriculture, Food and Wine.

These awards are presented annually, and are designed to recognise and reward academic staff who have made a sustained and significant contribution to the excellence of the educational experiences provided by the University.

The project Michelle was involved in was the development of a series of online learning and teaching tools specifically tailored to the learning and teaching needs of HDR candidates and their supervisors. The tools include

'discussion starters' on authorship and supervision and 'worksheets' on publication and dissemination, authorship and data storage and management.

### University of Notre Dame Australia Professional Development Award

Helping students to overcome the challenges of learning mathematics has earned Notre Dame academic, Dr Keith McNaught, recognition from Western Australia's Perth Convention Bureau. Dr McNaught was bestowed a Professional Development Award worth \$5000 during a breakfast held at the Perth Convention and Exhibition Centre on Wednesday 11 May. Dr McNaught, who is particularly interested in assisting mature age and disadvantaged students, is the Director of Notre Dame's Academic Enabling and Support Centre (AESC) on the Fre-

mantle Campus.

More details are available at:

[http://www.nd.edu.au/news/media-releases/2011/MediaRelease\\_DrKeithMcNaughtPDAward.shtml](http://www.nd.edu.au/news/media-releases/2011/MediaRelease_DrKeithMcNaughtPDAward.shtml)

### US Department of State Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs Award

Dr Sally Ashton-Hay, Lecturer Academic Skills Development Unit at Southern Cross University Gold Coast/Tweed Heads, has been named an English Language Specialist by the US Department of State Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, Office of English Language Programs. US Embassy programs around the world will be able to access Dr Ashton-Hay as a specialist candidate for teaching and training.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON ALTC AWARD RECIPIENTS, PLEASE VISIT [HTTP://WWW.ALTCEDU.AU/AWARD-RECIPIENT](http://www.altc.edu.au/award-recipient)



Dr Michelle Picard, University of Adelaide 2010 Faculty of Sciences Excellence in Education Award Winner

ATTEND PRE-CONFERENCE WORKSHOPS IN ADELAIDE ON 23 NOVEMBER TO LEARN MORE ABOUT APPLYING FOR ALL AWARDS AND GRANTS!



University of Notre Dame Deputy Vice-Chancellor Professor Jan Thomas with Professional Development Award Winner Dr Keith McNaught

# AALL Newsletter



Hawke Building, University of South Australia City West Campus

Follow the conference on Twitter: @aall2011



Come to the conference in Adelaide and sign up to visit Wang Wang and Funi, the Adelaide Zoo's Giant Pandas! Photo courtesy: JollyPeople.com

THE AALL 2011 CONFERENCE FOCUS IS "FORGING NEW DIRECTIONS IN ACADEMIC LANGUAGE AND LEARNING"

## Upcoming AALL Conference: Adelaide, November 24-25, 2011

Preparations for the 10th Biennial Conference of the Association for Academic Language and Learning are well underway. We have had a large number of abstracts submitted which promises to make the conference program and pre-conference workshops diverse and exciting. Registrations are now open and **early bird registrations close on 23 September, 2011.**

This year the conference is jointly organized and hosted by the University of South Australia, the University of Adelaide and Flinders. This is testament to the trademark AALL collegiality of the three South Australian universities, and has made it possible to produce what we hope will be the best AALL conference yet.

The venue for the Conference is the well-appointed Hawke Building at the City West campus of the University of South Australia. The Hawke Building is centrally located on North Terrace in the CBD, and is close to a variety of accommodation options. The Conference Dinner will be held in the Adelaide Convention Centre, just across the road from the main conference venue.

The keynote speaker for the conference is **Professor Marcia Devlin**, who was a Learning Advisor in a former life. Those who saw Marcia speak at the June CDSI Forum in Wollongong (or those who have read her blog) will know her as an engaging and dynamic thinker with a deep commitment to strategies of inclusion and quality educational re-

search.

A particular highlight of the social program is "**Popeye and the Pandas**", a river cruise on Adelaide's iconic Popeye boat followed by a tour of the Adelaide Zoo's Giant Panda enclosure. Don't forget to include this in your registration.

We warmly look forward to welcoming all our friends and colleagues to Adelaide in November. Please visit

<http://www.adelaide.edu.au/clpd/aall2011/>



## News from Victoria University: The Writing Space Opens

During Semester 1, 2011 the School of Language and Learning (SLL) of Victoria University in Melbourne opened The Writing Space, a peer-assisted writing centre, in the new Footscray Park campus Learning Commons.

The Writing Space is a dedicated place where students can go to speak to a peer writing mentor about their academic writing assignments.

Although common in many parts of the world where they have become an established part of the academic landscape over the last 35 years, the peer writing centre is relatively new to Aus-

tralian universities. Victoria University (VU) is one of a handful of Australian universities to start one.

The writing mentors were selected on the basis of being good writers who also demonstrated a keenness to work with other students to help them become better writers. As a peer learning approach, the writing centre pedagogy is based on non-prescriptive, open questions that focus primarily on the higher-level concerns for a piece of writing: structural organisation, flow of argument, and communication of ideas. Writing mentors have been trained in this approach to working with other

students' writing tasks.

The Writing Space is part of the overall Students Supporting Student Learning (SSSL) strategy of the School, which also includes student rovers in the Learning Commons, subject-specific peer mentoring programs and the online platform, SNAPVU. It reflects the active partnership of the SLL and the Library in the suite of learning support strategies hosted in the university's Learning Commons.

For more information contact Keith Kirkwood, Lecturer, School of Language and Learning, Victoria University, (Phone 61 3 9919 4015).

## President's Report (cont'd)

working on an AALL response to the discussion paper: Developing a Framework for Teaching and Learning Standards in Australian Higher Education and the Role of TEQSA. I am running ideas and drafts past the executive and other members for comments. By the time this newsletter goes to press, our response will be in and I will have circulated it to the membership discussion list. As you might imagine, the ALTC application and the TEQSA response are things that are done on the run, between

and after our other work, so it is almost impossible to get drafts to the whole membership in time for you all to have a say. The AALL executive members have been the ones providing input and responses to drafts and this has been great. If you are keen on being involved in reading drafts, commenting and having input to any future applications and responses like the ones I have described, please contact your state or territory representative or me.

Finally, it is AALL member-

ship contributions that have funded the collaborative events program and this year have funded two of the more traditional research based AALL projects. Some of your membership money this year has also gone to funding four international AALL members to attend the AALL conference in November. If you are new to AALL, you can find information about these various grants at <http://aall.org.au/grants>

See you in Adelaide!

Bronwyn James

## Resources and Publications

### Teaching students who have English as an additional language: A handbook for academic staff in higher education

A new HERDSA Guide, *Teaching students who have English as an additional language: A handbook for academic staff in higher education* by Katie Dunworth and Carmela Brigulio has been published. This HERDSA Guide provides practical advice and strategies for academic teaching staff who work with students who have English as an additional language (EAL). Its primary focus is on identifying ways in which students can be encouraged to develop their English language skills and knowledge within the context of their disciplinary studies. The Guide includes ways in which students can identify their language development needs, strategies they can use themselves to

help progress their English language proficiency, and ideas for staff to promote and facilitate their students' language growth. The Guide also discusses some of the challenges that EAL students face during their tertiary studies, as identified by students themselves in quotations within the text, and explores the ways in which the learning environment can be made more inviting for those who do not have English as their first language. The ideas within the Guide are intended to be accessible to staff from any academic discipline and require no specialised knowledge. Many of the suggested activities, once implemented, may reduce staff workloads as they will lead to a greater level of clarity for students about the requirements of their courses, higher levels of student autonomy and increased student facility with the language of

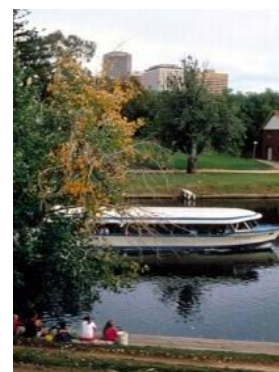
their discipline.

### Publications

Picard, MY; Warner, R; Vealautham, L (2011). Enabling postgraduate students to become autonomous ethnographers of their disciplines Postgraduate Education: Form and Function. In C. Nygaard, N. Courtney and L. Frick (eds.), Ch. 10.149-166.

Alyousef, HS; Picard, MY (2011). Cooperative or collaborative literacy practices: Mapping metadiscourse in a business students' wiki group project. *Australasian Journal of Educational Technology*, 27(3). 463-480.

Ashton-Hay, S. & Brookes, D. (2011). Here's a story: using student podcasts to raise awareness of language learning strategies. *EA Journal*, 26(2).15-27.



Cruise down the River Torrens on the iconic Popeye, on your way to see the Pandas. Photo courtesy: <http://www.southaustralia.com/9000869.aspx>

**Find and "like" the conference on Facebook!**

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON HERDSA GUIDES, PLEASE VISIT [HTTP://WWW.HERDSA.ORG.AU/?PAGE\\_ID=139](http://WWW.HERDSA.ORG.AU/?PAGE_ID=139)



Join friends and colleagues for a sumptuous Conference Dinner at the Adelaide Convention Centre Photo courtesy: <http://www.baulderstone.com.au>



Association for Academic Language and Learning

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For more information, please visit:  
<http://www.aall.org.au/home>

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### Benefits of AALL Membership

- Facilitated communication and collaboration among AALL members .
- Professional work towards institutional environments which provide the highest quality of learning experiences for all students and for all staff
- Professional support for the development of core, disciplinary academic language and learning skills and attributes in all tertiary education students
- Professional fostering of the recognition of the academic nature of the work of language and learning development
- Promotion of quality, diversity, internationalisation and flexibility in language and learning development
- Associate Membership with the Association of Tertiary Learning Advisers of Aotearoa/ New Zealand.
- Development and use of publications and conferences Lobbying support on issues relevant to AALL members.
- Support through grants and conference subsidies.

*The Association for Academic Language and Learning (AALL) was formed in November 2005, to provide an organisational body for the growing community of professionals around Australia who work with university students to enhance their learning and academic English. Academic Language and Learning staff work with students, both local and international, at every level from first year through postgraduate. They recognise that the challenges of moving through higher education are not remedial, but ones that every student faces: understanding the cultures of enquiry in academic disciplines, and developing control of their disciplines. As encapsulated in its mission statement, "AALL is committed to promoting and providing academic language and learning development through policies, practices and research that build, enhance and extend teaching and learning opportunities for all students and staff in tertiary education settings."*

### Feature article (cont'd from page 1)

"it" referred to brunch, branch, leakages, linkages, one of the cities or possibly even the researchers Sue or Frank was a mystery. The writer could not even distinguish a souvenir from a destination.

Such reports drain any brain but even worse, feedback pointing out so many errors could have a devastating effect on students with low confidence, self esteem or those struggling with inadequate language. If coping in Australian academic culture is not enough, Aussie slang

creates another slippery dip. Chinese students asked, "Teacher, tell us what is budgie smuggler?" Academic advisors need a ready toolkit and pinpoint accuracy to discern all sorts of language and learning issues.

Another email popped up: "Your feedback helped me finish my assignment last year and get good marks. I think I never thanked you for it. I would like to take this opportunity to 1st of all thank you for your guidance and ask you to help me

again..." Positive impact makes a difference. When international students traverse threshold concept portals in learning through English at university, there is cause for celebration. It seems that difference just could have been the result of teacher guidance too.

Name and affiliation supplied but withheld to protect anonymity

Reference

McCourt, F. (2005). *Teacher Man: A memoir*. New York: Scribner.

**Stop Press!** An update from Alex about the conversion of the GPPs to standards: DEEWR recently informed the GPP steering committee that the draft English language standards for higher education have been handed over to TEQSA, and that any decisions concerning the English Language standards project, including when consultation with the HE sector should commence, will now be the responsibility of TEQSA.



