**Tertiary SIG report: Ailsa Deverick and Martin Walsh, University of Auckland**

A Tertiary SIG Zoom meeting was held on 10 March, 2021. 26 TESOLANZ members attended and there was much appreciation of the chance to get together and share ideas and concerns. The key focus of the meeting was to look at innovative ways of dealing with the Covid-induced reduction in student numbers, particularly international students, in both the private and public sectors. The themes below reflect the issues and challenges that members in the different sectors falling within the scope of the Tertiary SIG face, and solutions which have, or which could be, adopted to meet these challenges. Those who could not attend sent a summary of their sector, which has also been captured in the points below.

**Accelerating the process for accreditation approval to deliver online English language pathway courses:** Members from polytechnics and PTEs expressed frustration about the slow NZQA process for gaining approval to deliver NZCEL’s Level 4 and 5 online. These institutions are unlikely to be able to offer these courses to overseas students until later in the year. In comparison, the approval process in Universities is faster, and so some Universities have been running their pathway courses online since the first lockdown in 2020.

**Re-deployment of English language teachers to other departments/courses:** Members from some universities and polytechnics explained how some teachers were being deployed to teach different courses (Foundation courses, Uni papers, literacy courses, teaching L1 etc.) and how some have offered to reduce their proportion in order to keep others employed. However, it was pointed out that only permanent teaching staff at universities and polytechnics were given these opportunities, and this option is not available for PTEs, many of whom have suffered huge staff losses. A couple of members felt that their institutions were using Covid as an excuse to instigate job losses, and that fault instead lay with earlier ineffective marketing.

**Government Support:** TEC has offered Covid Funding for PTEs who are affected by the downturn in international students. Essentially, they have been allowed to enrol learners currently living in NZ, who are dependent on temporary visas (work or visitors) but otherwise unable to access govt funded (SAC funds) ESOL programmes. The rationale is that allowing them access will improve their employability in a time when we have worker shortage (in some areas).

**More recruitment of domestic students:** A number of members talked about their successes in recruiting more domestic students. In some cases these numbers have increased by up to 40%. Strategies for this included connecting more actively with community groups and providing more flexible (e.g. part-time/evening), bespoke courses, although the increase could equally be attributed to multiple factors including increased unemployment. It was also noted that English Language Partners had seen a growth in numbers, with one member commenting that this was due to organisations looking to improve the language skills of their EAL staff.

**Creating short non-English language courses:** Some members from PTEs talked about creating short online vocational courses that did not require NZQA approval, to keep learners engaged, and to attract students to pursue further study. These included courses like accounting, digital marketing and construction.

The single most overriding comment in the meeting, however, was that the sooner the Government vaccinated everyone and the sooner borders were opened to allow international students to enter, the better.

**Moving forward:** It was decided that Zoom meetings every two months were an effective way to keep up-to-date, and so the next meeting will be in late May. A Zoom invitation will be send to all Tertiary SIG members in mid-May. Members, please ensure your details are up-to-date on the TESOLANZ website <https://www.tesolanz.org.nz/>.