Many students from language backgrounds other than English who come to study in Australia have considerable difficulties in communicating in spoken English. Difficulties exist at many different levels.

The workshop will address:

some oral communication problems faced by university students in Australia, particularly those from differing cultural and language backgrounds.

It will address this by:
The workshop will present a summary and analysis of the causes of some students’ major oral communication problems.

Workshop participants will examine a range of formal and informal academic communication situations, including seminar presentations, tutorial participation, casual conversation and 'administrative negotiations'.

Options to include spoken communication skills into courses will also be discussed.

The role of formal tuition in spoken communication and pronunciation correction strategies (at the suprasegmental level) will be analysed.

Alex Barthel is currently a higher education consultant in academic language and learning. Previously he was the Director (1992 – 2011) of the former ELSSA Centre, the academic unit which provided academic and professional English language services to students and staff at the University of Technology, Sydney. He was the inaugural President and he is the current Public Officer of the Association for Academic Language & Learning (AALL Inc.). He was a member of the DEEWR/AUQA Steering Committee which developed the English language standards for higher education (ELSHE), based on the Good Practice Principles for English language proficiency for international students in Australian universities (GPP).

Previously, Alex was Head of the Division of ESOL/Languages in the NSW TAFE Commission, the largest post-secondary educational institution in the southern hemisphere. Alex has extensive experience in adult language education, staff training, professional development and educational management in Europe and Australia where, shortly after his arrival, he taught English to migrants.
Alex has received recognition for his achievements through several Teaching and Learning awards from the Australian Government, from the University of Technology Sydney and from the NSW TAFE Commission.

Alex is formally registered as an expert in Academic Language and Learning with the Australian Government Tertiary Education Quality Standards Agency (TEQSA).

His current research areas and consultancy work include:

- the development of English language policy and procedures in the context of English language standards in higher education;
- the integration of academic language and learning (ALL) into discipline curriculum, assessment and related professional development;
- the conduct of audits/reviews and benchmarking of English language entry requirements and of the provision of academic language and learning support for domestic and international higher education students;
- the development, implementation and evaluation of post-enrolment language assessment (PELA) strategies of higher education students;
- the assessment of levels staff competence through recruitment procedures and performance reviews;
- the presentation of seminars and workshops in the field of academic language and learning;
- the assessment and implementation of strategies to improve academic integrity and reduce plagiarism;
- the development of cross-cultural communication, particularly spoken language, in academic and professional contexts;
- the acquisition of paralinguistic and suprasegmental features by adult second language learners; and
- the development of remedial and preventive pronunciation strategies for adult second language learners, with a particular interest in speakers of Asian languages learning English.