



Newsletter

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No. 1

February 2019

From the President

I would like to wish each and every member of IRSEA and your families the very best for 2019. Christmas is always demanding and I trust you had an enjoyable time. Our Christmas luncheon on 7 December was a great success with the usual good fellowship and camaraderie. We had about forty people present. Many thanks to John Allsopp for his organization. Our next luncheon will be on 3 May, and as usual this will be our AGM. Please make a big effort to be there and round up support from your friends in IRSEA. The venue is to be confirmed and we will send out more information shortly



It was wonderful to have Brent Corish with us at our Christmas lunch. He enjoyed these functions immensely and we all enjoyed his company. It was always difficult for Brent to attend as his fight with Parkinson's disease limited his mobility. Sadly, Brent passed away just a few days later on 15 December. All members mourn his passing and we convey our sympathy to Sylvia and his friends and family. IRSEA was well represented at a moving farewell at Rookwood Cemetery on 20 December.

At our Christmas function we released the report on preferred venues for IRSEA lunchtime activities. A fuller report is included in this Newsletter. As you would be aware the costs that Club York is now imposing make our lunches there prohibitive. A number of excellent alternatives were discussed and, in particular, the new Department of Education building in Parramatta was supported for at least one function each year. Our executive committee will need to consider options and provide you with our selection for the AGM.

The coming elections in NSW (23 March) and the Federal election to be held in May (probably), will see education a major topic of political debate. Front and centre federally will be the funding issue. The Gonski needs-based funding model appears to have been watered down by the Federal Government and Labor's more expensive option will need to be closely analysed. Great media for those interested in the future of our education system(s).

In the meantime NSW is dealing with an unprecedented growth in student numbers. This year there will be 819 000 students in public schools, the biggest number since 1979. These are mainly in the city areas and extensive school building, both in new schools and refurbished schools, is under way. The concept of high-rise schools appears to be losing support, particularly with the cost blow-out of the high-rise primary/secondary school, Arthur Phillip, at Parramatta reported to have stretched out to over \$300m. Figures beyond most of our comprehension. The Minister, Rob Stokes, has committed himself to ten new schools a year, growth that most of us have never seen. We wish the Minister and Department well in managing this pressure. Is this what high levels of immigration can do?

And what of the curriculum? Great to note that a review of the NSW curriculum by Professor Geoff Masters is now well under way. A draft report is due in the second half of 2019. As part of this there has been particular media about the HSC and the need for a greater flexibility, particularly in access to alternative credentials such as the International Baccalaureate (IB) or even the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE). The IB is popular among many private schools and appears most suitable for more academically capable students. It ensures all students studying the IB must choose a subject from six groupings that include a second language, mathematics, the experimental sciences, humanities, and the creative arts. Advocates of the IB state this is a more holistic model, particularly with its international focus. Its underlying principles may have much to commend them.

It is interesting also to see that principal groups (particularly the secondary principals) and others are seeking to change compulsory scripture. Given the large numbers of students without a designated religion (or scripture teacher) many see this as time that could be better spent on academic pursuits. A politically hot one, but this is the year to raise it.

And what of NAPLAN? Trenchant criticism about its usefulness filled the media last year. Where is this heading and do we over-test our kids in any case, with testing in Year 3, 5, 7, and 9, not to mention the exit credentials? Again a divisive one,

with more conservative elements seeing testing as the best process to ensure accountability and progress. Many Western countries are engaged in this debate.

If you have any strong views on these or other matters why not air them in our IRSEA Bulletin? Just send an email to the Secretary, Brian Davies, briandavies09@gmail.com.

In conclusion, may I acknowledge the recent sad passing since our last Newsletter of two of our esteemed colleagues. Lionel Phelps, a previous Regional Director of the old North Coast Region, passed away on 3 November 2018. Brent Corish, as previously noted, on 15 December 2018. We express our condolences to the families and friends of our colleagues.

We also wish a speedy recovery for any of our members who may be experiencing ill health.

ALAN LAUGHLIN
President



ALAN LAUGHLIN DELIVERS
THE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

From the Department

Thank you to Murat Dizdar, Deputy Secretary in the NSW Department of Education, for agreeing to provide a regular contribution to our newsletter. Also thank you to Kathy Powzun, Director School Operations and Performance, from Murat's office for providing this article. This new section for our newsletter is most welcome.

BRIAN DAVIES
Secretary

NSW Department of Education today . . .

The Department is made up of six Divisions, each led by a Deputy Secretary. These include:

- School Operations and Performance—Murat Dizdar
- Corporate Services—Peter Riordan
- Educational Services—Georgina Harrison

- External Affairs and Regulation—Leslie Loble
- Strategy and Delivery—Liana Downey
- School Infrastructure NSW—Anthony Manning.

The School Operations and Performance Division is responsible for six Operational Directorates, Leadership and High Performance, and the School Leadership Institute. The Division is optimally positioned to lead and direct more than 2200 public schools. Our schools continue to service the diverse range of communities across the state enabling all children and young people to have access to quality public education.

Operational Directorates: In Term 2, 2018, the Department launched the newly recast role of Director, Educational Leadership (DEL) across six school Operational Directorates each led by an Executive Director, School Performance. The revised role description and the increase of Directors Educational Leadership from 65 to 110 aims at better supporting Principals, with a greater focus on educational leadership, stronger collegial support, and practical guidance with the day-to-day running of their schools. It is an integral part of the School Leadership Strategy.

In response to our focus on the future provision and expansion of public education two additional Directors, Inner City Strategy and Parramatta Strategy, have been appointed to take the lead in the development of the state's first public high-rise high schools and multi-storey primary schools.

Leadership and High Performance is responsible for implementing key education reforms and central components of the School Leadership Strategy, which is the Department's ongoing strategic priority for public education in NSW. Leadership and High Performance provides support and services for schools in relation to local decision-making, strategic resourcing, school excellence, system registration, teacher quality, and leadership induction and professional learning for both teaching and non-teaching staff.

The School Leadership Institute (SLI) is a key element of the NSW Department of Education's School Leadership Strategy (September 2017). The SLI is responsible for the development of high-level leadership skills to ensure that future leaders are well positioned to make the difference we seek in public education. World-class, evidence-informed, future-focused leadership-development programs will support school leaders at all stages of their careers.

An Advisory Board, including international experts and representatives of key stakeholder groups, offers valuable insights regarding leadership development in NSW. Other international researchers also share their expertise with the School Leadership Institute.

The Aspiring Principals Leadership Program (APLP) is the first offering of the SLI. This rigorous program is for leaders who are willing to commit to a challenging program and who have demonstrated:

- how the program will benefit their leadership development;
- outstanding educational leadership and are preparing for principalship;
- a positive impact on teacher and student learning.

The Aspiring Principals Leadership Program is a fully funded, 12-month program that is evidence-informed and co-designed and co-delivered with the University of Wollongong (UOW). It is embedded within the values and policy architecture of the NSW public-education system and enables the building of system leadership and capacity within networks of leaders. There will be three cohorts of 50 aspiring principals in the first iteration of the program.

The program consists of:

- a 360-degree survey designed especially for the program;
- eight face-to-face *Leadership Seminars* delivered by international experts and outstanding practitioners enabling collaborative practice between participants;
- online intersessional tasks designed to support ongoing learning;
- three unique learning frameworks that support leadership for learning;
- a school-based *Leadership Inquiry* that provides participants with the opportunity to analyse current practice, develop new learnings, and reflect on the impact of their leadership actions;
- an engaging overnight experience at the Royal National Park, *Connecting to Country*, to enhance cultural awareness of Aboriginal Australians;
- strategies to build resilience and support principal well-being;
- support from an experienced Principal Facilitator;
- a comprehensive validation of an e-Portfolio depicting leadership impact;
- eligibility to apply for the Master of Education (Educational Leadership) at UOW with 50% credit points, as well as 64 Lead accredited hours with NESA.

The first Leadership Seminar for Aspiring Principals was held on 12–13 November 2018, presented by Emeritus Distinguished Professor Viviane Robinson and Ms Ann McIntyre. The evaluations were overwhelmingly positive. Each Leadership Seminar includes international speakers and time for participants to work with experienced

Principals as facilitators to embed knowledge and skills as they implement a Leadership Inquiry in their own school.

The full list of Leadership Seminars includes:

- **S1** School Leadership that Impacts Student Learning
- **S2** Inquiry and Innovation as a Foundation to Leadership Learning
- **S3** Leading a Whole-School Approach to Well-being and Academic Growth
- **S4** Leading for Inclusivity, Engagement, and Academic Growth
- **S5** Leading Authentic Improvement and Complex Problem-solving
- **S6** Leading Complex Organizations through Professional Collaboration
- **S7** Connecting to Country
- **S8** Leadership Inquiry: Presentation of Impact and Learning.

KATHY POWZUN

Director, School Operations and Performance



HEARING THE COMMITTEE REPORTS

Secretary's Report

The December luncheon meeting was very well attended, and thank you to those who were able to be there to make it such an enjoyable occasion. It was great to welcome a new member, Janina Sulikowski, as well as Graham Dawson, who has since joined our organization. It was also much appreciated that Dennis O'Neill came down all the way from Kyogle to be there. Unfortunately, Geoff Walton, our Welfare Officer, could not attend as he was recuperating from an operation.

Alan Laughlin acknowledged Peter Robinson for his sixteen years as editor and thanked Grant Beard for stepping in to assist with the production of the newsletter with Geoff Walton and Brian Davies.

Treasurer Ray Gillies reported that after the December luncheon IRSEA funds stood at \$3695 along with the \$15 000 term deposit. Ray also reported that in relation to a member's request for

an electronic funds transfer facility, such a facility will be available for the next luncheon meeting.

In the absence of Geoff Walton, Brian Davies reported on the passing of Betty Anderson, Gordon Campbell, Allan Cobbin, Jack Elliott, Paul Gallagher, Jack McLean, Lionel Phelps, and Joy Starnes.

The Christmas cake raffle for Stewart House was held. Thanks go to Joan Healy for making the cake and organizing the raffle. Together with the luncheon, around \$140 was raised for Stewart House.

Brian Davies reported that two issues have dominated the work of the executive. The first is the future organization of luncheon meetings. The second issue is the organization of the production of the newsletter from the start of 2019.

Future luncheon arrangements

A questionnaire was included in the November newsletter last year to provide member input for future luncheon-meeting arrangements. The response was very good, and thank you to all those who contributed.

At the December meeting John Allsopp, our Luncheon Coordinator, reported on the background to the need for an alternative venue to *99 on York*. Under its new arrangements the club had increased the cost to \$45 per member and now required a minimum of 40 to attend. This would mean that luncheons would probably result in a substantial loss for IRSEA and could not be sustained, while Stewart House would also lose the donations that came from the luncheons. John also mentioned the unsuitability of using the Bistro at the club, because we need a private room.

Alan Laughlin gave an overview of the results of the questionnaire (the results are provided below on page 5). Alan noted that a substantial number of responders indicated their preparedness to go to the Department of Education building in Parramatta and that many were prepared to attend two or three meetings there. There was still a divided response over a preference for a city venue or not. Members were thanked for the suggestions they made for alternative venues, both in the city and elsewhere.

During the discussion individual members suggested the City of Sydney RSL with its private rooms, variety of food, lower prices, and accessibility to Town Hall Station. Also suggested were the Royal Automobile Club, the old NSW Leagues Club, and the Law Society with its lower costs.

Alan Laughlin summarized that following the survey and the discussion at the meeting the direction looks to be:

- at least one meeting at Parramatta;
- explore other venues;
- the AGM could be at Parramatta.

The executive will consider the arrangements at its next meeting.

Future newsletter production

Grant Beard will be undertaking the desktop publishing while Brian Davies will be collecting articles and organizing the distribution. Geoff Walton will be assisting.

It would be helpful if an increasing number of members were to receive the newsletter by email as this would reduce costs and involve less work for volunteers. The November newsletter was emailed to 54 members, while 138 have email addresses. To change to receiving an email version members simply have to let the Secretary know by email, brian.davies09@gmail.com. Thank you to those members who have already done this for this newsletter. It was emphasized that a print version will continue to be available.

BRIAN DAVIES
Secretary



BRIAN DAVIES GIVES THE SECRETARY'S REPORT

Results of Luncheon Questionnaire 2018

A questionnaire was included in the November newsletter last year to provide member input for future luncheon-meeting arrangements. The results were presented at December's luncheon meeting. The response was very good and thank you to all those who contributed.

There were 40 responses. Of those who responded, around 75% were regular luncheon attenders and 85% lived in Sydney. The results are as follows:

Would you go to the Department of Education building in Parramatta for a meeting/luncheon?

Yes: 27

No: 6^(a)

Not normally: 1

Unlikely: 1^(b)

No answer: 5

- (a) Of these, three are not regular attenders and one has a Friday commitment and one has a health issue. Of the three regular attenders, two still said they might attend two to three meetings at Parramatta).

- (b) In Eastern Suburbs.

How many meetings would you go to in a year at Parramatta? 0, 1, 2, or 3?

Three: 11

Two or Three: 2

Two: 7

One or Two: 2

One: 5

Nought or One: 1

Nought: 4

No answer: 8

Would you prefer a venue in the city for meetings?

Yes: 14^(a)

Yes but not essential: 1

Yes for one if possible/occasionally: 2

No: 11

No preference: 6

No answer: 6

- (a) Of these only five said no to attending meetings at Parramatta. Half lived on the eastern side of the city, two outside Sydney, and two addresses unknown.

Suggestions for a future venue

CBD

Castlereagh Boutique Hotel (3); Masonic Club (3); Tattersall's Club, Pitt Street; City of Sydney RSL, George Street; Law Society Phillip Street; Chinatown; Basement, Macquarie Street but may be closing; Sydney Mechanics School of Arts.

Other

Ryde TAFE; RSL Club North Ryde; Ryde Eastwood Leagues Club; Sydney Rowing Club; Baulkham Hills Sports Club; Waverton Bowling Club.

Other comments

Nature of luncheon meetings

Good to have a speaker. Speaker for each meeting. Keep the specialist talks from selected educators.

Meeting with speaker is desirable. More guest speakers.

At least one sit-down luncheon a year. Vary the menu each meeting if possible.

Members enjoy informal chats over drinks before a meeting; have had some well-attended working sessions on specific topics/tasks—position papers, draft publications, etc.

Timing of luncheon meetings

Changing the day from a Friday would provide greater flexibility if a city venue is selected.

Committed on Fridays so don't go. Prior arrangements on Friday.

Location of luncheon meetings

Should go to DoE in Parramatta at least once a year; it will keep up the network with the DoE.

Need an excellent, quiet location that is very transport convenient; important for those with mobility issues. Understand the logic for Parramatta but geographically impossible for me. Parramatta is difficult by public transport and parking difficult. As members age, travel might become a problem. Two meetings at Parramatta might be manageable. Health an issue in getting there.

Country so can't attend; too far to go. Is it possible to consider technology for a meeting?

Separate room makes it difficult to find venues and might need cars to get there.

General

Apart from the newsletters, they are the life-blood of our organization. Hope luncheons continue. They are important but only to a minority of members.

Possible to establish a Transfer of Funds facility to make it easier to accept and pay and could help with attendance.

Keep up the great work.



EULA GUTHRIE ADDRESSING THE GROUP

Friends of Stewart House

As many would know, the Friends of Stewart House (FOSH), was set up as a support organization to provide both material and financial help to Stewart House.

IRSEA has a very strong link with FOSH and there are many members in both organizations. Each year a number of social activities are organized to provide both an enjoyable opportunity to get together with old friends and also raise a little money. The next IRSEA Newsletter will contain a full list of upcoming events, although one March event is listed here.

Membership of FOSH is \$20 (the bulk of which goes to Stewart House) and information and an application can be found on the Stewart House website: www.stewarthouse.org.au.

Three Blue Ducks in Rosebery

FOSH has managed to secure 40 places to this restaurant with Darren Robertson (MKR) and Mark LaBrooy (ex Tetsuya), chefs. Luncheon menu at \$60 per person (\$5 donation to FOSH).

When: Friday, 1 March, commencing 12.30 p.m.

Address: 1/85 Dunnings Avenue, Rosebery.

Step by step on how to book

1. Send email to kknnox@bigpond.com stating that you are coming and will pay by direct debit.
2. Direct Debit—Teachers Mutual Bank
BSB 812 170
Account Number 263444

ALAN LAUGHLIN
Secretary, FOSH

Request: Newsletter Contributions

Now is the time to start writing. All members are encouraged to write something to be included in our newsletter. Other members want to hear from you. It could be a sentence, a paragraph, or something a bit longer. It could be as a letter to the editor or an article.

It could be your view on any current developments in education. Alan, in his President's Report, gives examples such as funding, the pressure of growing student numbers, the curriculum review, scripture in schools, and the debate over NAPLAN. What are your views? What have been your experiences in one or more of these areas? What was the best policy in your experience? What was the worst?

You could write something about what you have been doing or what you are planning to do this year. Other members are interested.

You could contribute a photograph with what you have written or you might just send in a photograph with a caption.

Email your contributions to:

brian.davies09@gmail.com

OR

Post to: Brian Davies
Secretary IRSEA
24 Olinda Crescent
CARLINGFORD NSW 2118

If emailing please send text in a Microsoft Word file (.docx or .doc) or text file (.txt) and any photographs in .jpeg format.

Plan to contribute to the April newsletter if you can. Contributions are needed by 21 March.

If you have any questions please don't hesitate to contact me.

Thanks.

BRIAN DAVIES
Secretary



GRAHAM DAWSON AND WARREN FAIRFAX

Executive Profiles

Alan Rice

I am a member of the IRSEA Executive Committee and served as President in 2011–12. The work of the organization has been important to me in connecting former colleagues with whom I share similar interests and values.

I retired from the Department as Executive Director of Early Childhood and Primary Education in September 2001, but moved immediately to Macquarie University to the Australian Centre for Educational Studies, at first in a part-time position and in 2004 full-time as Dean of Education. At the end of 2008 I retired again and was appointed by the Council as Emeritus Professor of the University.

I have continued in education through chairing an Academic Board of a Theological College as well as

by being a member of a school board and a vocational education college board specializing in early childhood education and business studies. The latter has given personal experience of recent failings in vocational education.

In recent years we have enjoyed travelling abroad and have ventured to Mexico, South America (Brazil, Peru, and Galapagos), New Zealand, Scandinavia, and Europe, but have also spent time with our family in the central west. The coming year will see us visit Japan and cruise the North Pacific to Vancouver.

Chris Carroll

Chris Carroll was appointed Inspector of Schools—Secondary (English/History) in January 1988, based in the then South Coast Region. He was appointed Cluster Director (Warilla) in 1990 and subsequently Director (Quality Assurance) and Chief Education Officer (Quality Assurance).

In 1995, Chris was appointed District Superintendent (Wollongong). He relieved as Assistant Director, Illawarra Institute of TAFE, and in State Office positions as Acting Director School Accountability and Reporting, and Acting Director Educational Measurement and School Accountability. He retired as Director of Schools (Wollongong) in 2008.

Chris and his wife Karlene retired and stayed in Wollongong. He established his own company, Outlook Education Consultancy, and worked in the areas of school reviews and program evaluations. Chris also lectured and tutored in the Education Leadership Program at the University of Wollongong. Chris and Karlene are keen caravanners in Australia and international travellers currently visiting family in Canada. 2012 saw them trek around Australia. Both enjoyed the opportunity to spend time with parents when they were alive and are now very active grandparents.

Chris was drawn to committee membership for social reasons initially. 'I enjoyed meeting with colleagues and discussing former times that constituted a very enjoyable part of my life—friends of the highest order, committed to students and loyal to their employing organization.' He also finds the newsletter informative and the speakers at luncheons a good way of keeping up to date with educational change.

He was elected Vice-President in 2015 and President in 2016, at a time when IRSEA was modernizing its operations and redefining future roles.

Chris has just celebrated his 70th birthday.



JANINA SULIKOWSKI AND KERRIE IKIN

Members Write

The Depopulation Disease

Allan Mills

In another age it was a requirement of our work to visit many small towns in our Districts that proudly possessed schools of varying pupil populations. This did not happen in the lives of the inspectors in the metropolitan regions, but it was an ongoing experience for the DI in the country regions. Of course, the members of the Secondary Panel also visited some of these small towns as they fanned out across the state in their assessment duties, because many of these smaller towns possessed a central school. Many stories have been generated from visits to these smaller towns and some have been recorded in 'I Remember When'.

There were many of these small towns and they varied greatly in their nature and characteristics, but part of that nature was a sense of cohesion felt by those who lived there, which generated security and interdependence. These communities were great places to rear children, for it was possible to allow young ones a degree of freedom with confidence they would be safe. Children also knew that if they transgressed beyond the accepted norm the nature of their misdemeanours would quickly be related to their parents, for privacy and secrecy were not notable characteristics of these towns. Sadly, although these towns were great places in which to grow up, they did not offer much to the young adult. The graduates of the schools in these small towns were unable to find opportunities on the local employment scene, so if they did not inherit the farm they had to leave their hometowns in the search for jobs. Those who wanted to follow careers that required tertiary education were also forced to emigrate. Thus a substantial proportion of the young population, and certainly the most academically able, departed the local scene. In most cases this departure from the towns was permanent, as they found employment elsewhere; they met partners and set up homes and their former

lives in these small towns retreated further and further into the dimming mist of the past. When their parents, who had remained in the smaller towns, passed on, there was no longer any reason for their children to return to the towns of their birth and the separation from their origins became absolute. It is a sad fact that the continual drift of young people from country towns has now reduced those towns to a poor reflection of their former selves.

In many cases the schools in these towns had a vitality arising from young principals who were ambitious and sought to advance themselves by taking appointments, distant from the cities, that others, senior to them, would not accept. Quite often, too, the staffs in these schools were young people only recently embarked on their teaching careers and appointed as probationary teachers. This was where they learnt their trade. Many young teachers found themselves in such places following their first appointments and met the locals who would become their life partners. These stayed in the community, established homes, raised their families, and returned to teaching later in life at the same school in which they had commenced their teaching careers so long ago.

I recently embarked on several nostalgic trips to revisit some of the towns where we had lived in previous times, and other places that I had regularly visited as a DI. I had fond memories of these places and the scenic countryside traversed in getting to them and I wanted to revive my recollections. I enjoyed my appointments in most of these towns and had good memories from my days in them.

Let me regale you with some experiences.

Although it was part of my job routine, many would have regarded some of my trips as adventures. Consider a visit to Bongongo Public School in the mountains about half way between Tumut and Canberra, so the journey was through deep valleys and highland country. Before leaving for Bongongo I had to consider the likelihood of snowfall and how deeply the creeks would be running. If the auguries were good, I could decide to head out, and an early start was advisable. To get to Bongongo School I first left Tumut and headed out across the Lac-malac Plain until I came to Mundongo School. I continued on and crossed the Shaking Bog Creek. I went through it really, as there was no bridge and it had to be forded. Once through the creek, I came to Tumorrroma, whose school had closed, and then passed through the cool, tree-lined roads of the Billapooloola State Forrest. This was significant because the roads through the forest were sealed and well kept and driving became easier. Once through the forest it was only a short way further on to Adjungbilly. This was really my destination, but I was never able to determine why the school at

Adjungbilly was called Bongongo Public School. I suspect it was related to a large property called Bongongo Station. Perhaps the original school had been established on that property before the village of Adjungbilly became established. If I had any of the bush poet's skill I could have made something of this trip.

A particularly strong memory was a rest spot at the side of the road in the Billapooloola State Forest with a table and seat in pleasant shade. I often had my lunch there as an apple tree grew in the rest area and, in the season, one could just get up from the table and pull an apple from the tree to finish lunch. That is really fresh fruit!

I can still remember the visual impact of the Tooma Valley as I entered it heading for Khancoban, or the Gilmore Valley opening up before me as I began the descent from Batlow to Tumut. Eating lunch under the Elm trees bedside the Murray River at Jingellic with the trickling noises of the river and the bird-calls from the trees will always remain in my memory. In winter the snow on the planted pine trees conjured up visions of driving across a Christmas card. When I was appointed to Tumut, Doug Swan told me that one of my predecessors in the position, the late Joy Starnes, had told him she felt guilty, as she spent so much time travelling through this beautiful countryside she thought she should give back half her salary. Doug concluded, 'I await your cheque'. As I settled into the job I realized what Joy had meant.



JOHN ALLSOPP EXPLAINS
THE LUNCHEON OPTIONS

The wonderful countryside is still there and it is still as stimulating to travel through, but the same cannot be said for the small towns at which one terminates these enjoyable travels. These towns have shrunk markedly and seem lifeless. They are now only shells of their former magnitude. It would appear the slow attrition of the population as the young people sought opportunities beyond their hometowns has reduced these towns to villages. The streets are deserted; unoccupied houses and shops are common; the schools have only a fraction of their former enrolments; and the population has aged. It is depressing to walk the streets of these

towns with their beautifully fitted fronts to the shops that are all unoccupied and slowly deteriorating.

We stopped in one town with a central school in a fruit-growing area, which formerly had a commercially viable fruit cannery, and were amazed by the lack of people in the streets. The cannery is now closed and the workers employed there have left town, with their children. A fire subsequent to the closure of the factory disclosed asbestos in the roof of the cannery and this led to the removal of the roof—but not the demolition of the building. The roofless shell of the factory is still there, but it brings to mind buildings seen in dismal photographs of towns in Europe or England taken after bombing during the Second World War. We went into a nice little coffee shop for morning tea and found some people with whom to engage in conversation and discussed the former nature of the town. These people readily admitted the diminishing population and pointed out that, although they knew of the town from earlier times, they had only moved to live in the town when they remarried, late in life. As pensioners they needed to take advantage of the cheap housing that was available. A previously productive country town was becoming a retirement village.

Travelling on we came to one of the Snowy Mountains towns where I had often stayed overnight in my Departmental days. Here again we observed the diminution disease that is infecting our country towns. This town was a creation of the Snowy Mountains Authority, which provided the residences in the town, but also constructed the infrastructure necessary for the town to function. One such amenity was a general store, which had functioned since the construction days of the 1950s, but had just recently closed. The few residents still remaining obtained their emergency supplies from a little alcove with a few shelves in the coffee shop we were now frequenting. I imagine their general shopping was done in the closest town, which was over the Victorian border. When I went to the motel bar there was only one patron, at about 4.30 p.m.! The school now had only one teacher. A local I spoke to ventured the hope that the proposed Snowy 2 development would lead to additional residents in the town. This remains to be seen.

And so the shrinkage goes on. One frequently finds that motels that previously had a functional dining-room for their guests to have an evening meal have now closed that amenity and assume their guests will go downtown to eat at a local pub or club. All of these closures mean less employment opportunities for the local young people. I must say that some of the larger country towns, or even cities, that are the provincial centres of their regions are flourishing as they reinvent themselves for living in the twenty-first century but continue

their long-time function as the service centre for the hinterland surrounding them.

Unfortunately, this decline of small towns is not a localized phenomenon. On a recent trip to Tasmania I found similar happenings. All over the island contraction is obvious. The west coast, where mining was once a vibrant industry, is dying. Strachan will survive on tourism, but I fear for the rest. I revisited Zeehan on a Saturday to refresh my memories of the magnificent mining museum there. The streets were deserted. In a valiant attempt to prevent their decay from misuse, the cinema, police station, courthouse, and Masonic lodge had been amalgamated into a large history complex. This is interesting, but there were precious few paying visitors to cover the upkeep. Houses and shops were vacant with 'For Sale' signs on them. The hydroelectric towns of Waddamana and Tarraleah are shadows of their former selves with vacant buildings everywhere. Even in the Huon Valley, in the south-east of the state, timber museums, which had flourished for years, devoted to the magnificent native furniture timbers, including the Huon Pine, have gone. We had morning tea in a former bank, which is now a stylish coffee shop, but the massive safe was still obvious from where we sat in the former banking-chamber.

It appears to me that Australia, which has always had a preponderance of its people living on the coastal littoral, is seeing this become more pronounced and the interior is becoming more sparsely populated. Much of this is at the expense of our small country towns. When considering that a large proportion of our exports, and the food we eat, is produced in these areas we need to contemplate the long-term ramifications.

Membership Changes

Deaths

We learnt in November of the passing of **Betty F. N. Anderson** (of 93 Shirley Road, Roseville 2069), who died peacefully at the San Hospital in Wahroonga on 12 July 2018. Betty was a retired Cluster Director of NSW secondary schools and a former secondary Principal of North Sydney Girls' HS, Mosman HS, Davidson HS, and Hornsby Girls' HS, among other postings.

In January this year we were informed of the death of **Juliana Dartnell** who passed away on 24 August 2018. Institute records indicate that Juliana commenced her teaching career in May 1959. Julianna was appointed as an Inspector of Schools in January 1983 and resigned in January 1990. The 1988 published List of Senior Officers records

Julianna as an Inspector of Schools located in the Schools Directorate.

As mentioned in the President's Report **Lionel Phelps** passed away on 3 November 2018 and **Brent Corish** on 15 December 2018.

New members

We have recently welcomed two new members: **Janina Sulikowski**, who held the positions of Chief Education Officer and Cluster Director and who was President of the Institute of Senior Educational Administrators from 2000 to 2004; and **Dr Graham Dawson**, who held the positions of Inspector, Chief Education Officer, and Director.

The views expressed in this newsletter are those of individual members and do not necessarily reflect those of IRSEA. IRSEA accepts no responsibility for the accuracy of those views.



GRANT BEARD AND BRIAN DAVIES

Dates for your diary in 2019

Lunch meetings (venues to be confirmed)

Friday 3 May (AGM)
Friday 2 August
Friday 6 December

Newsletters

April (copy by 21 March)
July (copy by 20 June)
November (copy by 24 October)

Executive Committee meetings

Monday 11 February
Monday 18 March
Monday 17 June
Monday 21 October
