



INSTITUTE OF RETIRED SENIOR EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATORS, INC.

# Newsletter

ABN: 78 259 388 090

No. 1

February 2020

## From the President

Welcome to a new year and to our new members who have joined since our last Newsletter.

The end of last year and the beginning of this one has been unprecedented for NSW in terms of bushfires and floods. I am sure those of us who have been relatively safe in Sydney and other major centres have turned our thoughts continuously to our members who have been caught much closer to the devastation that has occurred across the State. We hope that some more stable times lie ahead. Throughout these crises, however, I have been heartened by the action and response of our Education system, supporting schools and communities in all those areas affected by fire or flood or both.

I also keep an eye on Twitter in general to see what is happening in our individual schools and system as a whole. It is wonderful to see regular tweets by Murat Dizdar highlighting so many of our schools' achievements and the achievements of individuals. It is equally wonderful to see teachers, principals, and others sending tweets about how beneficial a professional-learning course has been or how supportive Murat, their Director, or another Departmental officer has been to them personally. I reflect back on my 37 years in the Department and know how much small acknowledgements meant to me from people I respected. In the days before such instant social media, these acknowledgements often felt few and far between and were not widely broadcast. But having the means to highlight something or praise someone does not mean that it will happen. I believe that Murat Dizdar and the whole senior team in School Operations and Performance should be acknowledged for helping to create the current climate of trust, openness, and sharing. And we at IRSEA have been first-hand beneficiaries of this climate, with genuine support and regular communication being offered to us and an acknowledgement that our years of collective knowledge (dare I say wisdom) should not be forgotten and indeed tapped into from time to time.



In terms of our collective knowledge, I was able to catch up with Dr Reynold Macpherson and his wife, Nicki, while on a short holiday to Rotorua last year. For those who may not be aware, Reynold was commissioned a few years ago by the ISEA to research the history of the Institute of Senior Educational Administrators to mark its centenary in 2014. Reynold was able not only to find and then undertake a thorough analysis of all available documents but also to tap into our collective memories to piece together the history of service provided to NSW school education by our members. The result was a truly wonderful history, simply entitled *The Institute*. As well as writing this history, some of you will remember Reynold from his days at UNE where he and Patrick Duignan developed the Educative Leadership project and Joint Master's Program. These were truly heady days for educational leadership. Reynold is now fully retired from academic work but certainly not taking life at a leisurely pace. He is fully ensconced



ALAN LAUGHLIN, FRED COOK, ALLAN MILLS, TONY RE,  
KARLENE AND CHRIS CARROLL

in local government, having recently been elected to the Council and challenging the Mayor at every opportunity. Over a few dinners, however, we had time to reminisce about education in NSW over the past thirty or so years, remembering many great educators, many restructures, and the changing face of leadership development during that time. He was thrilled that IRSEA is still going strong and asked to be remembered to all those that he interviewed for *The Institute* and in particular to

those of the Steering Committee. In particular he mentioned Alan Pratt, who somehow managed to obtain access to photographic archives for the Department, and Geoff Walton, who helped to mobilise many of our members for interviews and provided a great deal of research support. One of the main players on that Steering Committee was Brian Powyer, who sadly passed away suddenly late last year. Brian did not join IRSEA, although he kept promising me that he needed to fill in the forms and do so. But Brian was a staunch supporter of ours. When Ron (Ikin) became ill, Brian took over the executive officer role of the ISEA and continued that role right up until his own death. Brian was a dear friend and I will miss him greatly.

I look forward to another great year for IRSEA and I look forward to welcoming those Directors, CEOs, and other senior administrators on their retirement into our fold.

KERRIE IKIN  
President

## From the Department

### The Department's response to statewide devastation

Bushfires on an unprecedented scale have caused widespread destruction and deeply affected our communities. Despite the challenges we faced we swiftly engaged and coordinated relevant and contextual support based on a deep understanding of each community and its needs.

A number of schools were damaged in the bushfires. However, thanks to the efforts and collaboration between Department staff, emergency services, other government agencies, the Rural Fire Service (RFS), and local councils, trades, and businesses, all schools were operational for the first day of term.

Further to this, we acknowledge the number of staff across all areas of the Department who gave up their time and in some cases risked their own safety to help with the fire-fighting efforts and services to the community.

The Department has an ongoing commitment to supporting all those affected by this crisis. We are aware that the bushfires have touched everyone in different ways. For students, staff, and the broader community who have been directly affected, distress, trauma, and behavioural changes are possible. We are centrally coordinating tailored and enhanced support. Interventions that schools are engaging with include:

- A detailed plan that is in place to support students who need counselling support as a result of their communities being affected by the



bushfires. A tiered model is being used based on expected needs—intensive support to be provided to communities that have experienced high levels of impact. There is coordination between the Department, NSW Health, and Be You/Headspace to tailor the community response.

- A dedicated online resource that links to the comprehensive staff-support package in place for staff. It provides staff access to information, resources and services to support their health and well-being, as well as to provide practical information and resources such as financial information, leave entitlement, and other assistance packages under State and Commonwealth recovery plans.
- Collaborations with the Association of Independent Schools and Catholic Schools NSW to ensure a consistent approach across all schools.
- Maintaining involvement in the ongoing emergency response and recovery operations, with an Education Liaison Officer present at the RFS State Operations Centre.

An ongoing response requires close and considered monitoring of the impact of this crisis in an ongoing and strategic way. The Department has invested in the establishment of a dedicated Executive Director, Bushfire Relief Strategy, who is responsible for leading the development, coordination, and delivery of key bushfire relief priorities across the cluster and the Department. This optimizes support for bushfire-affected school communities as a primary point of contact for communities and operational leaders within the organization regarding bushfire-relief efforts. This role will coordinate and enhance the management of cross-Departmental and inter-agency liaison and collaboration to achieve the effective implementation of relief activities.

Central to all of the activity surrounding bushfire relief is the rebuilding and healing of our school communities and children affected by the devastation of recent events. The long-term outcomes desired for our school communities require deep and considered psychosocial intervention and support. It is imperative that this be done in close partnership with our school communities in ways that enable their increasing sense of safety and agency for the betterment of children's ultimate learning and well-being successes.

KATHY POWZUN  
Executive Director, Bushfire Relief Strategy  
Office of the Deputy Secretary, School Operations  
and Performance

## Secretary's Report

Last year ended on a high note with a well-attended December luncheon meeting at the Castle reagh Boutique Hotel. Thank you to those who were able to be there to make it such an enjoyable

occasion. Thank you also to John Allsopp, our Luncheon Coordinator, for all his work in organizing the event. Kerrie Ikin, our President, paid tribute to Brian Powyer who recently passed away and was known by many of our members. Kerrie also reported on the good relationships that have continued to grow between IRSEA and the Department of Education, including their support for IRSEA communication with retiring departmental staff to encourage membership of IRSEA.



ALAN RICE, TONY RE, CHRIS EVANS, BARRY LAING

John Allsopp outlined the negotiations with the Castlereagh Boutique Hotel this year, which have assisted IRSEA to hold two of the next three luncheon meetings in 2020 at that venue and to hold all executive meetings there. The hotel's administration has been very supportive and helpful. The Annual General Meeting in May, though, will still be held at the NSW Department of Education's offices at Parramatta. A meeting at Parramatta is important for the close relations between the IRSEA and the Department.

Geoff Walton, our Welfare Coordinator, reported on those members who had passed away in 2019. Geoff also thanked members for providing information about their experiences of working with the member who has passed away. Such information is very useful when personalizing the letter of condolence that is sent to the deceased member's family. He urged that this continue.

Our Membership Officer, Allan Mills, reported the present membership as 157, consisting of 118 men and 39 women. It is pleasing that at the start of 2010 there are three more new applications to be members.

As is tradition at our Christmas meetings, Joan Healy and Eula Guthrie conducted a cake raffle for Stewart House. This raised \$150 and their efforts are very much appreciated.

The disruption caused by the weather this month meant that the executive committee meeting on 10 February could not be held. Fortunately, the next executive meeting is not too far away on 16 March.

Importantly, the start of 2020 sees Syd Smith taking up the position of Newsletter Editor. I would

like to thank Syd and wish him well. In standing down as interim editor, I would like to thank Grant Beard for his excellent work in desktop publishing in 2019 and for his general advice and Geoff Walton for his work and advice in getting together the four editions of the newsletter in 2019. From my experience last year, I can say that the most helpful thing that members can do is to write contributions, however short. Please don't leave it to others—support Syd by sending in your contributions.

In relation to giving support, the next newsletter in April will include nominations to the executive. The functioning of IRSEA depends on the willingness of members to assist on the executive. Please consider becoming involved if you are in a position to do so. The 2020–21 executive will be decided at the Annual General Meeting on 1 May (if you can't attend you can still nominate).

Finally, I would like to draw your attention to two events that you might like to go to in the first part of this year. The first is a dinner on 21 March to celebrate the 100th Anniversary of the Teacher Exchange Program. The celebration is being organized by the NSW Exchange Teachers League who are celebrating their 90th anniversary and incorporating the public education 100-year international exchange milestone. Many of you might have had associations with the program or memories of it. Because the closing-date for bookings is 28 February, we have already emailed the information and booking form to all members for whom we have an email address. If for some reason you did not get it, see the note on page 4 of this newsletter.

The second event for your diary is the ANZAC Remembrance Service which is to be held at the Department of Education's state office at 105 Phillip Street, Parramatta, in the William Wilkins Gallery at 10 a.m. on 16 April 2020. A report of last year's service was provided in the July Newsletter. It was a most moving service. Details of this year's service will be provided in the April newsletter.

BRIAN DAVIES  
Secretary

## Treasurer's Report

IRSEA finances continue to be healthy and sufficient for our purposes. Our Society Cheque Account has a balance of \$4072.23 as at mid-February. This will be reduced over the coming months by the costs of the mail out of this newsletter and subscription forms.

We have a term deposit with a current balance of \$15 397.50 and expect interest of \$408.03 when it matures on 19 February 2020. I propose to reinvest the term deposit for two years at the historically low interest rates.



I would appreciate it if members could pay the IRSEA annual subscription fee of \$15 in April 2020. Our financial year is 1 April to 31 March so payments before April are not reflected in the appropriate (current) financial year. I'll mail, or preferably email, the subscription forms to members early in April. Subscriptions are due by the date of the AGM in May.

RAY GILLIES  
Treasurer

## Friends of Stewart House

The Friends of Stewart House (FOSH) is a fund-raising group that raises money through a number of very enjoyable social functions each year. Many members of IRSEA are also members of FOSH. Last year we were able to donate some \$17 000 towards the operation of Stewart House. If you are interested in joining just check out the Stewart house website (\$20 per annum or \$50 for three years).

Our AGM and annual luncheon was held on 5 February at the Epping Club and some 30 members were in attendance. A new executive has been elected for 2020 and our first committee meeting will be held this month, where a program for the year will be developed. This will be reported in future IRSEA Newsletters.

The new president is Marilyn Bourne, an ex-principal of Stewart House. The Secretary is Kerry Knox (a new member of IRSEA), Treasurer, Cecilia Wilson. I will keep my hand in preparing the FOSH Bulletins.

ALAN LAUGHLIN  
Secretary, FOSH

## Exchange Teachers Dinner

As mentioned above in the Secretary's report, you should have received by a separate email the details and booking-form for the NSW Exchange Teachers League's 90th anniversary dinner. The main details are:

*Date:* Saturday 21 March 2020

*Time:* Pre-dinner drinks 6.30 p.m., Dinner 7.15 p.m.

*Venue:* Grand Central Room, Mercure Hotel, 818 George Street, Sydney.

*Cost:* \$80 per person

*Contact:* Bruce Pacey, 21 Tompson Road, Revesby NSW 2212; email [etlnew@yahoo.com.au](mailto:etlnew@yahoo.com.au)



ANNE EGGINS, JEAN ALLEN, EULA GUTHRIE,  
JOAN AND TONY HEALY, JACK BASELEY, JOHN EDWARDS

## Members Write

### Student Protest and Climate Change

*Anne Eggin*

I feel embarrassed by the efforts being made by young people today to make us all, especially our governments, do something about climate change. It is remarkable that one Scandinavian girl sitting outside her school rather than following instructions, could have led to so much passionate debate around the world. She has addressed the United Nations and important forums of world leaders. All this has happened because she acted on her belief that, something had to be done to stop the dramatic increase in atmospheric carbon dioxide. Young people everywhere have taken up her challenge. Their protests are actually making a difference, because they have forced business and governments to look at the future more than the present. A few days out of school will not hurt their academic careers. Not doing something could cause the whole planet a great deal of harm: the consequences of getting hotter are enormous and devastating.

I am embarrassed because I understood the issue in first year high school, way back in 1955! All I did was argue with my science teacher, who told me not to worry about it. I could see that the increasing population and all the changes to the environment that flow from that, could only result in the earth getting hotter, oxygen and water getting scarce, and the weather becoming more violent. Four science degrees, a career in science teaching, university lecturing, and even being a school science inspector and I don't think I have made much impact, compared with what these teenagers have managed today. They are wonderful and need any support we can offer. It is not too late to alter our devotion to growth and expansion and become dedicated to sustainability. I would like to think that our efforts at making our students articulate and thoughtful are bearing some fruit.

*I am sure many of our members have a strong view on this topic one way or another. Why not let us hear your view? The Australian Association for Environmental Education (AAEE) has this month declared its support for a Climate Emergency. The majority of its members are teachers in Australian schools.—Ed.*



BILL AND ROSEMARY MUIR AND VAL GILLIES

## The Myanmar Education Quality Improvement Program

Grahame Dawson

For the last two years I have been working as a short-term international adviser in Myanmar for the Myanmar Education Quality Improvement Program (My-EQIP). I share this role with Neville Highett, who most of you will know from his quality-assurance work in NSW Department of Education. The program is funded by the Australian Government as part of its \$80 million commitment to support development in Myanmar in 2019–20.

The aim of the program, as the name implies, is to improve the quality of education of education in Myanmar schools. The main focus of the work is building an integrated quality assurance and accreditation systems for basic education, TVET, and higher education. My-EQIP is one of many education development programs being implemented in Myanmar by international donor agencies to assist Myanmar to improve its education system. Decades of isolation and neglect under the military regime resulted in poor quality infrastructure, low levels of participation in schooling, poorly trained teachers, a lack of teaching resources, and an outdated curriculum.

In 2017 Myanmar was ranked 145 out of 188 countries in the UN Human Development index and is considered a lower-middle-income country by the World Bank. While there have been significant improvements in the Myanmar economy since it began its emergence from five decades of military rule, a third of its 54 million people, mainly from rural areas, still live in poverty. This is down from 48% in 2005.



Ethnic-based conflicts, which date back decades, continue and while most people are aware of the situation with the Rohingya in Rakhine State, there are ongoing conflicts and many internally displaced people in Northern Shan and Kachin States. While Myanmar is keen to open up the country to foreign tourists, these remain no-go areas.

Between 2013 and 2015 Myanmar conducted a major review of the education sector. From this the government has developed a National Education Strategic Plan to address the most pressing needs and to improve education quality.

This is a huge undertaking as it means Myanmar will address concurrently issues as complex as teacher preparation, improved TVET provision, revised teaching and learning practices, revising the curriculum, delegating greater responsibility for education management to local areas, and introducing quality assurance systems for higher education, TVET and basic education.

The size of the task is apparent when you consider that there are 47 500 schools, more than 10 million students, and about 350 000 teachers in Myanmar government schools. In addition, there is an extensive monastic education system and private



providers. The challenge is exacerbated by the generally poor public infrastructure in the country and the remote location of many communities. In one of my school visits in the capital Naypyidaw, one of the principals had travelled six hours on his motorbike from the mountainous region to the east to meet with me and my colleagues. He was keen to head back before the wet season rains made his journey impossible. This scenario is typical of like in remote rural areas.

Until recently most primary teachers received one year of preservice training and secondary teachers two years. This is changing under the education reform program and Myanmar is introducing four-year degrees for teacher education. The teachers I have met are committed to their students and said that they were excited by the changes in education, especially the move from teaching practices that were almost entirely teacher-directed and largely involved repetition and rote learning. It will be interesting to see how they cope with the pressures they will face from proposed large-scale changes in the curriculum, teaching methods and roles.



PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS AND CLASSROOM, NAYPYIDAW

The administration and management of school education in Myanmar is highly centralized. Although there are state/region, district and township education offices, they mainly enact directives from the central Ministry of Education. The government is keen to change this as part of its education reforms but there is some advantage in the present arrangement as it enables the Ministry to implement a national approach to the reform process. The challenge remains, of course, for the Ministry to support local personnel and schools to implement the proposed reforms.

Neville and I are working with local advisers and the Ministry of Education to design and implement a school-based quality assurance system. This will represent a significant change from the previous inspection and external monitoring systems that have existed since independence. School compliance with external regulations was the main feature of this system.

The new approach will require schools to self-assess their effectiveness against a School Quality Assurance Standards Framework and use the findings to develop a School Improvement Plan. This is a major shift in thinking and practice for education officials, principals, and teachers. As part of the self-assessment process schools will need to ensure the participation of the parents and local community which in some places will be a significant challenge. While parents are very supportive of schools and value education, they have had little involvement in school management or review.

Neville and the local team we are working with have developed the framework and my role is to help them implement the initiative and provide capacity development for education officers and principals. We have started the implementation process, but there are still 46 000 principals to train, a challenging but exciting prospect especially for the local Ministry of Education staff who are leading the process.

At the same time as Neville and I are working with schools, other advisers are assisting in the development of accreditation and quality assurance systems for higher education and TVET. One of my jobs will be to work with the Ministry of Education to bring these different elements together in an integrated policy.

The MY-EQIP will end in mid-2021, but of course it will take much longer for Myanmar to reform its education system. It has been rewarding for Neville and me to be here at the beginning of this incredible journey.

The Myanmar people we have worked with are well qualified, talented, highly professional and committed to improving life for Myanmar people. Because Myanmar was isolated for such a long period there has not been the extensive development that you will find in other Asian countries. Yangon remains a green city with a much more Asian feel than other places. This is mixed with the reminders of the British colonial era and make it a very interesting place to visit. Add in opportunities to visit Bagan and Mandalay and you will have a rewarding visit.

*Perhaps you have had an overseas experience like Graham. Please let us know.—Ed.*

## Travelling to Russia in 1972

*Syd Smith*

The forthcoming Exchange Teachers 90th anniversary dinner reminded me of a time long ago when my then wife accepted a one-year teacher exchange appointment to Harringey Infants' School in London in 1972. I accompanied her and was also offered a special appointment to another school at

Somerset Lower School in Lordship Lane, Tottenham. The opportunity to teach in another system was a very valuable experience of course but the vacation I took mid-year was, in many ways, even more exciting. On arrival at the school the principal asked me to teach English and Religious Education to five classes ranging from Years 5 to 8. This was somewhat of a challenge as my qualifications at that time were to teach Geography, Commerce, and Economics, but overall it did turn out fine in the end.

### A camping trip to Russia

At around June of that year I decided to join a camping trip managed by a company known as Transit. They were an Aussie group based in London catering mainly for Australians and New Zealanders. The trip involved travel by bus and then ferry to Sweden and then on to Denmark, Finland, and Russia, later returning through Poland, East Germany, Berlin, France, and back to London. There were only two other males on the trip, a Mal Turner from Sydney and an English guy, Tony Digby Bell. It was certainly an exciting time, right at the time of the Cold War. In Moscow at one time it was my turn to order the meals for our group at a supermarket where they still used the abacus. I had to wonder how Russia, which was so backward then, could pose such a threat to the West.

The night before this I had lost my exposed films in the Moscow camping-ground because of a robbery while sleeping in our tent. Russian youths were the culprits evidently, the same street-smart individuals who continually hassled us for chewing gum, jeans, and drugs during the day. The Transit guides who led the tour also played a minor part in the black market at that time. On leaving Finland they purchased crates of alcohol to be sold later to the Russians at inflated prices. I also saw one of the guides openly selling his leather jacket to a Russian in the street. In Minsk I went to a post office to purchase stamps, only to find that I needed a pot of glue in order to attach them to my postcards. Self-adhesive stamp technology was yet to come. Russia was such a wild open country of huge distances then, yet no matter where we drove, there was always somebody wandering around in an isolated, uninhabited forest.

We came into the country through Leningrad (now St Petersburg) via Finland and travelled south to Moscow. This was the time of Brezhnev and Kosygin, when Russia was slowly opening up its borders to tourists, but *Intourist* still had a lot more to learn about how to treat its visitors. The tour through Russia was highly supervised, and, after the robbery, I was required to spend a day repeatedly describing the incident to police at the Moscow police station. The detective involved told me that every crime in Russia 'is always solved' and

I would have my bag and films returned quite soon. Unfortunately, Russia had a huge delinquency problem to which authorities refused to admit. Needless to say, I am still waiting 47 years later for my bag and its contents. Not that it's relevant, but I still have the detective's name and phone number, all in Russian, of course, for what it's worth. He never answered my letters, unsurprisingly.



FRED COOK, CHRIS CARROLL, ALAN RICE, BRIAN GILLET

Our guide at the time was a young 21-year-old girl who still hated the Germans but kept a strict eye on us as required by her superiors. To visit Russia in those days you did not go for a holiday; you went to be educated, or brainwashed, by their propaganda staff. Unfortunately, we never saw a school, because it was the summer vacation. Days of 40 degrees were common and queues of people would line up to buy a flat black beer dispensed from a keg on wheels in the street. A glass would be handed in turn to customers who quickly scoffed down the warm brew and promptly handed it on to the next customer in the queue. Under no circumstances were we allowed to walk on the grass and, if we did, soldiers would chastise us. At one stage a man approached and asked me to take some of his documents to the Swedish Embassy in Berlin; needless to say, I politely refused. The surprise of all, however, was to run into an American friend who once rented our Cronulla flat while he was teaching Science at Port Hacking High. There he was in Red Square! I asked him what the Russians were saying about us while we walked along the street. He told me they were insulting us, saying we were corrupt capitalists and were uttering other uncomplimentary insults. Obviously, Russians were not happy with tourists and were strongly influenced by anti-Western propaganda. I did love the Moscow underground, however. For a single kopek you could travel anywhere on its concentric circular railway system. The décor in the stations was impressive, just like the interior of a cathedral, and not a sign of litter anywhere! Within Moscow itself there were six-lane roads but hardly any traffic on them, and even then, mainly tractors. Outside of Moscow you came across a two-lane highway only. The only time I saw some action on



the city roads was when the Cuban president, Fidel Castro, came to town in his motorcade.

One other memorable incident was to visit the tomb of Lenin. There he was in his sealed glass coffin, dressed in a morning-suit, all laid back, peaceful, palms outstretched, and his face seemingly attached to a set of false wax ears. At each corner of the coffin stood a soldier, armed, looking extremely threatening. If we spoke, he raised his rifle and hushed us even when someone's thong flapped and made a minor noise. After walking around the coffin without a pause, we then ascended the alternate stairwell back into Red Square. As tourists we were given special priority in the very long queue that extended for miles. I saw some Russians crying because they had been on the queue all day and had not made it to the entrance by closing-time. Before entering the mausoleum, we had to leave any belongings, including cameras, in a cloakroom and recover them afterwards. Security was intense as the Russians were terrified that terrorists might want to destroy Lenin's corpse. In the Kremlin Wall were the ashes of past national heroes, including previous leaders. Stalin, however, was missing for some reason.

On leaving Russia we drove on to Minsk and Poland. One time we stopped for lunch in a field near Warsaw where local farm workers came out of the fields and offered us strawberries. They were incredibly friendly and generous and still used horses and wooden carts to transport their goods to market. We entered East Germany and kept going on into West Berlin through Checkpoint Charlie. Of course the wall still divided the city and at night you could hear the Russian guards talking from guard towers at strategic points along the barrier. To enter West Berlin after several weeks in Russia, Poland, and the Ukraine was like coming from a grey, eerie time-warp into a land of brilliant, sparkling sunshine. I never thought I would be so happy to see the bright neon lights of Coca Cola, Dior, and fast food. The difference between the East and West was stark. Nevertheless, we were happy to do a tour of East Berlin the following day. East Berlin still had the best heritage buildings and also the square where Hitler burnt the books. On this day we had an East German guide who promised us to: 'show you some special places outside the city and I will tell you some secrets I'm not supposed to'. Of course, this was an opportunity for us to be subsumed with more Russian propaganda. We reached a quiet rural spot where he invited us to ask questions. This eventuated as a very bad deal, because some of the younger people in our group saw this as an opportunity to raise the most undiplomatic topics that one could possibly tolerate.

'Why do people try to escape from East Berlin if it is such a great place to be', one of my fellow travellers asked.

'Those people are rubbish and we are glad to see them go', responded the guide.

This form of inappropriate questioning continued until at one stage I wondered if we would ever be free to return to the West, but eventually the guide broke into a terrifying temper tantrum and told us he had had enough of us and we were to return to Checkpoint Charlie immediately and go back to the West.

From here we eventually returned to London and back to school at Somerset Lower. Australian teachers were highly respected at that time and the principal was overjoyed that I would come back to them.

I recall the headmaster, Mr Leademan, asking me before I left on my trip, 'But why Russia, Mr Smith? It's so far away?'. I naturally said it was quite close in fact.



RED SQUARE IN JUNE 1972 WITH KREMLIN WALL AND LENIN TOMB IN BACKGROUND.

*Any more adventures from your past you would like to share? Please let us know.—Ed.*

*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.*



GEOFF GEORGE, KERRIE IKIN, GRANT BEARD



## Vale

**Sam Weller**

Gerhard (Sam) Weller died on 7 November 2019. Institute records show that Sam commenced his NSW teaching career as an English/History teacher in January 1958 and that in February 1981 he was appointed as an Inspector of Schools, (English/History) in the old St George Region. After the rationalization of the Central Metropolitan and St George Regions in 1983 Sam was relocated to the newly created Metropolitan East Region.

In 1987 Sam was appointed Assistant Director, Statutory Boards of School Studies, and President of the Board of Studies in 1994. Following his retirement in November 1997, Sam and his wife joined their son and daughter and grandchildren in Western Australia.

## Newsletter Notices

### Contributions

We never have a surplus of stories, opinions, or reveries for our four newsletters, so please think about sharing your thoughts with us for a future newsletter. We need contributions for the three remaining newsletters this year. The due dates for the remaining three are 19 March, 18 June, 22 October. Therefore, there's not much time to get something together for our March issue and at this stage we have yet to receive anything. If emailing please send text in a Microsoft Word file (.docx, .doc, or .rtf) or text file (.txt) and any photographs in .jpeg format.

Send your contributions by email to Syd Smith: [sydsmith@optusnet.com.au](mailto:sydsmith@optusnet.com.au)

or by post to

25A Finlay Rd, Turramurra NSW 2074.

Many thanks also to Dr Anne Eggins and Graham Dawson for their welcome contributions to this issue. If you are interested in the Climate Change debate or have a story to tell about a project you have undertaken since retiring we would love to hear from you.

### Get your newsletter by email

And while on the topic of newsletters if you have a computer, iPad, or iPhone and still receive this newsletter by post, why not consider receiving it by email? Not only does it reduce our costs, but it has certain advantages for you. The digital version is in

full colour, quicker to receive, and easier to store for future reference. If you don't have these facilities, no problem. We will continue to involve you in our mail-out of course.

To change to receiving the newsletter by email just let the Secretary know: [brian.davies09@gmail.com](mailto:brian.davies09@gmail.com)



GEOFF WALTON, KERRIE IKIN, BARRY LAING, GRANT BEARD,  
GEOFF GEORGE, CHRIS EVANS, ALAN RICE

## For Your Diary

### Lunch meetings

Fri. 1 May. Parramatta

Fri. 31 July. Castlereagh Boutique Hotel

Fri. 4 December. Castlereagh Boutique Hotel

### Newsletters

April (copy by 19 March)

July (copy by 18 June)

November (copy by 22 October)

### Executive Committee meeting

Monday 16 March

Monday 15 June

Monday 19 October



JOHN EDWARDS AND JACK BASELEY

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### Do We Need to Change Your Contact Details?

If you are changing your address or other contact details please let us know. If you have provided us with an email but have not received emails over the last few months then please let us know. We might have the wrong email or your email might not be working. If you have not provided us with an email and would like to receive emails that go out from time-to-time then please let us know.

Please provide the following details:

Name: .....

Street: .....

Town: ..... State: ..... Postcode: .....

Email address: ..... Phone no.: .....

Email your details to: [brian.davies09@gmail.com](mailto:brian.davies09@gmail.com)

**OR** Post to: Brian Davies, Secretary IRSEA, 24 Olinda Crescent, CARLINGFORD NSW 2118.

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