



INSTITUTE OF RETIRED SENIOR EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATORS, INC.

# Newsletter

ABN: 78 259 388 090

*IRSEA enriches the lives of retired Senior Educational Administrators through engagement, collegiality, friendship, and support while deploying its intellectual capacity and educational expertise for the betterment of public education in New South Wales and beyond.*

No. 1

February 2022

## From the President

Happy New Year to everyone and welcome to the first newsletter for 2022. Last year was a challenging and difficult year for many and I trust that 2022 will be more enjoyable and rewarding.



We were delighted to be able to hold an in-person luncheon meeting in December last year. It was a very successful occasion and the presentation by Leanne Nixon, Deputy Secretary for School Performance (North), gave all present a sense of optimism and hope that the community will see an improvement in student learning outcomes as the initiatives that Leanne spoke about are implemented.

For those members who could not be present or join us on line, Leanne's presentation slides are included in the IRSEA website, which was officially launched at the December luncheon meeting. Ray Gillies, and the team that have supported him, have done a great job in developing the website and it is hoped that it will provide members with access to information about IRSEA and keep you up to date with plans and activities. The web address is: <http://www.irsea.org.au>

In this newsletter I have updated members on our progress towards implementing our priorities for 2021–22. A key priority for 2022 is membership renewal and the Executive Committee is seeking your assistance to extend and renew the membership. Our membership profile is increasingly skewed towards the older age brackets and for IRSEA to grow and thrive we must make a concerted efforts to recruit new and younger members.

Over the years your Executive Committee has implemented a series of actions to achieve this goal, including seeking support from the Department of Education to contact potential new members. In March, Executive Committee members will meet again with senior DoE officers to pursue this option and to brief them on the concept of Associate Membership for senior administrators approaching retirement. We are hopeful that, as result of this

meeting, IRSEA will be given the opportunity to contact directly potential members.

However, evidence indicates, that one of most effective means of recruiting new members is through a direct approach of current members to colleagues and associates of DoE or TAFE. For this reason, I am seeking your assistance by doing two things.

First, could you please approach potential members and provide them with information about IRSEA and invite them to join. Information about IRSEA and the initiatives it is taking to make it more attractive to retired senior administrators can be found on the IRSEA website. You will also find copies of the membership application forms under the Membership menu on the website:

<http://www.irsea.org.au>.

Second, if you know of potential members but prefer not to contact them directly, could you please send their contact details to me at my email address, [grahamd48@gmail.com](mailto:grahamd48@gmail.com), or to our new Membership Officer, Kerrie Ikin and we will contact them directly ([kerrie.ikin@gmail.com](mailto:kerrie.ikin@gmail.com)).

Thank you for your assistance in this important matter. I look forward to engaging with you during 2022.

GRAHAM DAWSON  
President

## From the Department



Hello everyone and Happy New Year. I hope you all had a restful Christmas break with family and friends. It was certainly lovely to meet many of you in person at your recent IRSEA Christmas luncheon and I am pleased that Leanne Nixon's presentation was so well received.

This term I continue as relieving Director, Office of the Deputy Secretary School Performance North, and the year has already presented some challenges as schools continue to respond to the complexities associated with COVID.

You may have heard in the media that our Department spent much of the December–January

holiday period making extensive plans for the return of schools and for the expected shortage in school staff due to teachers' either contracting COVID or being forced to isolate owing to a family member's getting COVID. There were also concerns relating to large numbers of students possibly being absent for such reasons. The wrap-around support we provided for these eventualities included:

- Free Rapid Antigen Tests for every student and staff member to be used twice a week to check for COVID.
- Permission for schools to draw on existing staff within the school, e.g. library teachers, careers advisers, non-teaching Assistant Principals to replace teachers, prioritizing classroom teaching. All corporate teaching staff were also required to be on a list of casual teaching staff across NSW to be used if necessary and Directors Educational Leadership were given access to this list to use when needed.
- Remobilization of learning-from-home resources for students to use when needed.
- A 'clearing of the decks' when it came to Departmental reform and requests of schools during Term 1 using a consolidated school schedule. Changes are limited to a few focus areas, including curriculum reform, supporting positive behaviour, and school leadership development.

At this stage, these supports have proved effective in keeping schools operational during the first five weeks of term.

This term's work in schools will focus on familiarization with the new Inclusive Engaging and Respectful Schools policies and procedures, including the proposed Student Behaviour Strategy, which aims at increasing student engagement through evidence-based positive-behaviour support.

Inclusive Engaging and Respectful Schools is based on our moral imperative that we are here to guarantee the best educational opportunities for each of our students, no matter where they live or what their background or disability, throughout their entire educational experience. We believe this starts with supporting all of our school leaders and teachers to use best practice approaches to ensure every school is a place where children and families feel welcomed and valued. Fostering connected, cohesive, and safe learning environments require a whole-school community approach, and the 'Inclusive, respectful, and engaging schools' reform aims at strengthening relationships between schools, families, and communities.

The case for change is strong. Across our schools, student suspension rates remain high, and the educational outcomes and attainment for students with disability are well below that of their peers. Suspension rates for vulnerable students in NSW are high, and disproportionately so for

students with disability, Aboriginal students, students in rural and remote areas, students in out of home care, and students experiencing socio-economic disadvantage.

The Inclusive, Engaging, and Respectful Schools policies and procedures have been developed in close consultation with the Primary Principals' Association, Secondary Principals' Council, Teachers Federation, Public Service Association, Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (AECG), and P&C Federation.

Another key piece of work this year is the trialling of the new K-2 English and Mathematics Curriculum in selected Year 1 classes. Four hundred and six primary schools will be trialling this curriculum, supported with new resources, ongoing professional learning, and a team of newly appointed Department curriculum advisers and within school Assistant Principals (Curriculum and Instruction). This roll out will inform the future model of planned curriculum reform.

Exciting times to be in education! Thanks for giving me this opportunity to communicate with you.

RAEHEL MCCARTHY

Relieving Director, Office of the Deputy Secretary,  
School Performance North

### IRSEA Subs Renewal Reminder

Annual subscription fees for 2022 became due on 1 January. Renewal notices are being emailed or posted and you will have received yours or will receive it soon. The subscription amount remains at \$15 for 2022. We look forward to everyone renewing and benefiting from membership of our active, collegial Institute.

## Website launched

We launched the new IRSEA website at our excellent luncheon meeting last December.

While the site is under continuous improvement, we have moved from the draft stage to the URL of [www.irsea.org.au](http://www.irsea.org.au). Please email your comments on the site to Ray Gillies at [webadmin@irsea.org.au](mailto:webadmin@irsea.org.au).

Currently, the website is available to the public. We have tried to balance information and services that are valuable for IRSEA members with a responsibility regarding privacy issues. There are, however, numerous photos of members at events on the site as well as resources including access to IRSEA newsletters going back to 2011. Unfortunately, it does not contain a list of members at present. Please let us know if you are concerned about any unacceptable invasions of your privacy.

We hope that you will see the advantages to IRSEA's membership of having a website, and recommend it to other colleagues and potential new members.

## Friends of Stewart House

As a boarding provision for children from across the state, Stewart House continues to be severely affected by COVID.

In the period February to June 2021, Stewart House, in a modified provision, was able to support some 360 children in 18 groups to complete a 6-day stay and to participate in a board-endorsed, modified COVID-Safe program.

Unfortunately, Stewart House was once again closed to student enrolments and implemented a full shutdown on Friday 25 June 2021 after NSW was plunged into lockdown in order to slow the spread of the SARS-CoV-2 Delta strain. Stewart House remained closed to student enrolment for the remainder of the 2021 calendar year.

From October 2021, the NSW Department of Education restricted activities for public school students using a level system (Levels 1–4) within its 2200+ schools. These remained at Level 3+ until the end of Term 4, which required schools to cease camps, out-of-area field trips, and overnight stays, and to limit excursions to outdoor locations within the local government area of the school where the school could demonstrate COVID-Safe practices. Under these restrictions, Stewart House was unable to accept enrolments, even when children started to return to mainstream schools in late November 2021.

In 2022, additional risk and health restrictions will apply to determining the suitability of children for entry into the Stewart House residential setting, owing to the ease with which the SARS-CoV-2 Delta and Omicron strains spread within household environments, including to intensive care.

However, Stewart House is preparing to operate in Term 1, 2022, with one-week groups of 20 children from metropolitan schools. Whilst places have been offered, the take-up is, understandably, still sporadic. However, it is planned that in Terms 2–3, 40 places will be offered each fortnight to country schools, with an eventual return to full operation planned for Term 4, 2022.

COVID has seen an extensive and dramatic impact on operations. Stewart House will return to full operation this year to help our needy children, but this will need your continued support and understanding. IRSEA continues its commitment to supporting Stewart House and we shall keep members advised of developments as programs return to normal.

ALAN LAUGHLIN

IRSEA Stewart House Liaison Officer

## Members Write

### An Australian Story

Syd Smith

In August 1922 SS *Euripides* arrived at the port of Brisbane after a long trip from the United Kingdom. On board were Beatrice Smith and her three sons, Sid, Tom, and Arthur. Beatrice, known to her friends as Beat, was a widow resulting from the carnage of World War 1; her husband, Tom, having lost his life at Fleurs in September 1916, one of the many thousands of casualties at the Somme that year. History tells us that many war widows came to Australia at that time, bravely looking for a new life and having no idea of what might await them there. It took courage and an acceptance that risking the unknown was a better option than remaining in the old country, which apparently offered little hope or a guaranteed future for them.

During the voyage Beat had met a tall red-headed Irishman who intended to buy a farm at Bonville on the north coast of NSW. He promised he would meet her there in a week or two and they could form a partnership to work a farm together as husband and wife. Beat had lived most of her life in rural Oxfordshire; she understood farming well and was strongly attracted to this new man in her life. She arrived at Bonville several months later as arranged but after waiting a week, the recalcitrant Irishman was nowhere to be seen. So, down to her last shillings and with three sons to support, Beat bought a local newspaper hoping to find a job that might be available. There was one offer from a farmer, a Mr Kasch of Boambee, seeking the service of a housemaid to care for his two disabled sons, both born with a congenital muscular disease which, in time, would lead to their early deaths. The Kasch family were German migrants who first first lived at Korora but had then moved to Boambee in around 1905. Old Mrs Kasch was a carrier of the gene that had led to her sons inheriting the disability, but, fortunately, her daughter, Ada, was not affected and was born healthy. The gene only afflicted the male offspring. The third and youngest son, Oscar, like his sister, had fortunately escaped the unfortunate curse and was still able to work the farm.

As the years went by the old parents passed away and the two disabled brothers were transferred to a specialist men's hospital at Lidcombe. This finally left Beat and Oscar to run the farm with Arthur, the youngest son. Boambee is only 8 km from Coffs Harbour and is famous for its mixed farming, pine-apples, peas, tomatoes, beef cattle, and, of course, bananas. By this time Sid, Beat's eldest son, had moved to Bowral to work in a quarry, but only to lose his life in a truck accident in 1930. At 13 years



of age Tom joined the navy on the original HMAS *Sydney*, while Arthur remained at the farm. In early 1942 Beat and Oscar were married. Oscar had thought that if he had married earlier his children would have been like his brothers, never realizing that the gene was carried only by the female line and, in his case, his mother. To demonstrate this further his sister, Ada, had a son, Harry, who was born with a disability.

During the war two Italian POWs were sent to the farm to provide labour for Australia's food production. They were a friendly pair, full of laughter, grateful for any kindness given to them, and entertaining everyone with their wonderful sense of humour. They were housed in the tractor shed and when Beat cooked meals for them they would always comment with enthusiastic compliments like, 'Mrs, *this food is very high!*', obviously unaware that they were inferring the food had a strong, unpleasant smell. On another occasion two Welsh brothers came to work on the farm during the Depression. Bill and Lou Selby became lifelong friends to Beat and Oscar and remained on their social list whenever they visited Sydney. During the war Oscar wasn't called up for military duty. Not only was he a designated food producer, but of German heritage as well.

The 1950s were good years for Australian agriculture and Beat and Oscar benefited from the good farm prices of the time. Bananas were very welcome at the Sydney Markets and the buyers also welcomed a python or carpet snake, to keep the rats down in the rafters of the storage sheds. Oscar would scrawl a large S on the packing case to warn the recipient of its contents before they opened it on delivery. However, the best money earner was from passion fruits. The Mynor Fruit Juice Company paid big money for any new farmers who wished to embark on this new successful enterprise. Passionaria was the big cordial drink of the time.

In 1963 the farm was sold and Oscar and Beat moved into Coffs, right next to the Coffs Harbour Advocate Office in Moonee Street, but within two years Oscar had died of a heart attack and Beat lived alone there until the 1970s, when she moved into a care unit at the Salvation Army Hostel. In 1982 Beat passed away at the age of 98.

It's hard to remember that people who migrated to Australia in those days were unlikely to ever return to their home country and see their families again. The twenty-four hour plane trip was not an option for most people like Beat whose only communication depended on the occasional cable or letter from 'home'. Sometimes they would announce the passing of a family member, but often she would receive an outdated London *Daily Mirror* newspaper parcel from them. Beat lost two of her three sons during her lifetime, Sid in 1930 at the age of 24, and Tom from cancer in 1950 at the age of 41.

But despite years of sorrow and joy, many like Beat took heart and continued to live on, first through their memories of those who came before them and often through an endearing love of the land they left behind. Oscar's mother, for example, planted a baby hoop pine beside the farmhouse in 1908 to remind her of her alpine Germanic homeland. Unfortunately lightning split the tree in half in a wild storm in 1960, but not before it had scattered its cones and seeds across the landscape. Today the farm has become a newly developed residential area with modern homes and a connecting web of roads and service centres. One street is known as Kasch Drive and across the estate are numerous hoop pines sprouting at random. How many people living there today understand the reason for the naming of the streets and the unique hoop pines thriving across the new estate one can only wonder. How many realize that the small insignificant post office and general store next door to the Kasch farm was the birthplace of the Lindsay Transport Company, now known throughout Australia. More surprisingly, however, one can hardly understand why developers allowed a house to be built on the old farm's floodplain right beside the Middle Boambee Creek. On this low-lying area floods occur after heavy rainstorms. If people understood the lessons of the past and listened to those who came before them, they would have had so much more to learn.

And what have I learnt from those who came before me? Well, I know Beat was a strong woman and taught me quite a lot about life. She was my grandmother, and she left me with many life skills. Tom was my father who had a short life and was unable to finish influencing my development, but fortunately parts of him remain in my personality. Oscar was my step-grandfather and taught me to be strong and not to give in easily. Arthur was the last of Beat's sons to pass on. He was my uncle and helped fill me in on the big questions of the family's past, such as the ones you have read about here.

We walk in the steps of those who came before us.

***Do you have a story to tell?** Please let us hear about it. To those of you who are widows of our late members we welcome your stories as well. If you do not have computer skills but wish to put pen to paper, we welcome your contribution. We can type it for you for future newsletters. Please post to Editor IRSEA, 25A Finlay Road, Turrumurra NSW 2074 or email typed versions to [sydsmith@optusnet.com.au](mailto:sydsmith@optusnet.com.au).*

## **You're Never Too Old to Learn**

*Grant Beard*

What do you do in your retirement? Well, for many of us, the question is, How did I ever find time to go to work? Travel, dining out, movies, theatre, reading, gardening. For the last two years COVID

lockdowns (official or self-imposed) have severely restricted the first four of these, but the emergence of Zoom and similar apps has opened up new ways of getting together and doing things.

One area of interest for me is Wesley School for Seniors. The 'school' is run by Wesley Mission in Sydney and has been operating, in fact, for fifty-two years, taught entirely by volunteers, and available for anyone 55 years of age or older. It offers a diverse range of learning experiences and activities, with different levels of learning available from beginner through to advanced. Until 2020 the classes were held face to face at Wesley Mission in Pitt Street, but as a result of COVID-19 these classes have been temporarily suspended and the School has introduced a wide range of online learning. You can now take many popular courses in the comfort of your own home, using your computer, tablet, or phone. Some examples of the courses offered are: *Strength, Mobility, and Balance; Smartphone Photography; Tablets, Smartphones, and Zoom; Shakespeare; Guitar; Ukulele; Piano; Money Matters; Mysteries of the Universe; and a range of languages for both beginners and others, including Mandarin, Italian, Spanish, and Latin.*

When I was at school I enjoyed Latin (and mathematics, of course!), and since retiring I had been attending Wesley's Advanced Latin classes. These, unfortunately, were a casualty of the suspension of face-to-face classes. For various reasons, the Latin classes did not move to online mode, so, not wanting to let the subject drop completely, I boldly (for a maths teacher) offered to start a Latin class for beginners. This has now been running successfully for five terms and progressed to 'intermediate'. This term I offered as well a second course for beginners, although there have been no enrolments for this one so far.

The School is always looking for new students and new volunteer teachers. If you would like to find out more information, the website is:

<https://www.wesleymission.org.au/find-a-service/seniors-and-aged-care/staying-active-and-connected/wesley-school-for-seniors/>

## Observations on China

### China, the Chinese, and the China Literacy Imperative

Lindsay Wasson

#### Part One: Introduction

In this opinion piece, I begin Part 1 of a series of observations on China, the Chinese language, and Chinese history that attempts to put the current tensions around China and its emergent economic supremacy in some context—personal, professional, and historical. I will argue that, rather than retreating from a positive and collaborative

disposition towards China (in the face of some provocation I will agree), we should acknowledge, celebrate and participate in China's rise and comprehensively equip our nation with the means to grow the relationship.

First, some confessions. I am a longstanding Sinophile and an avowed advocate for the teaching of Mandarin and Chinese history in our schools. My fascination with China goes back to at least 1962 when I was enthralled by Frank Capra's *Battle for China* in the *Why We Fight* series made during WW2. At school I studied Chinese history in the History Honours Course in 1964–65. On the wall in my room in Bruce Hall at ANU I had a poster of Mao Zedong and subscribed to Chinese periodicals to the consternation of some fellow residents (including the son of the then Minister for National Service in the conservative Gorton administration). As a teacher, I taught Chinese history. I visited China in 1981 just after the first opening up of modern China under Deng Xiaoping. I have led delegations to China as Director of Curriculum, negotiated MOUs with key Chinese government agencies, and was responsible, with my magnificent team, for the development of highly celebrated Chinese Curriculum materials, including satellite programs and an SBS series. In Western Sydney Region I established the Ningbo Volunteer program and saw the growth of Mandarin programs in our primary and secondary schools. I also speak elementary Mandarin thanks to my wonderful friend and teacher, Professor Dr Shi Shuangyuan, appointed by the Ministry of Education in China as the Chinese language educator in Curriculum Directorate during my time there. My friends in Ningbo, particularly my Chinese 'brothers' and 'sisters' (*Wo de didi he meimei*) regard me as *Zhongguo Tong*—an 'old China hand' or 'China expert' and I wear that designation with pride.

I therefore approach these articles with clear biases and perhaps rather eccentric credentials, when I expatiate on China and Chinese language learning in what follows. You may find some of what I write confronting and even inflammatory, unacceptable, and naive. But I will explain the origins of the Sinophile within and how my passion for China has guided much of my professional life. Through these revelations and reflections, I hope you will be disposed to read the articles with some regard for the sincerity and passion that underpin them.

So, where do we stand with China? In the worst place since before 1972 is the quick answer. The relationship has reached a dreadful point: a stand-off; a breakdown in ministerial communication; sanctions imposed; and threats, demands, and hostility abounding. The politics of this breakdown I will not attempt to dissect, except to acknowledge there is responsibility on both sides. However, as Geoff Raby contends (Australia's Ambassador to

China 2007–11), the ‘China Threat Industry’ of the US and Australia (think Peter Dutton for example) that has heightened tensions and inflamed the hawks has turned many countries, as well as people, against China and the Chinese. The education industry in Australia is a casualty. We have abandoned a number of primary, secondary, and tertiary Mandarin programs (for example Confucius Classrooms and Institutes) and international cooperation and research programs with China through coercion, neglect, lack of support, and complacency. There is no vision at the macro level for what our relationship with China should be in 50, 20, or even 5 years’ time! If we have no plan, apart from screaming ‘China is a threat’, how can we ever arrive at the optimal destination for our nation in this, the Asian century?

The consequences can be felt on many levels. Educationally, and therefore for our future as a nation, the consequences are both dismal and alarming. Collectively, if we don’t work for change in our China stance and in some of our educational priorities, the outcome could be catastrophic. This means not retreating from Mandarin programs, but growing them; establishing more Mandarin bilingual schools, not eschewing the notion; and becoming more China literate rather than disavowing greater understanding and capacity through hostile and fearful ignorance.

These are a complicated and challenging educational aspirations in circumstances of great international tensions, sanctions, and open antipathy, but to ignore them will be to our enormous loss and detriment. China is our neighbour but no longer our friend. This series of articles sets out why and how we must revive that relationship and set a path for the future that is based on realities, not hatreds and fears, and which will be to the benefit of our students and our people for generations to come.

Why is this important? Among the answers are perhaps some of these:

- China will be the most powerful nation on earth. On some measures, this has already occurred. Most assessments, however, show this will take place by the end of the current decade.
- China will protect and even grow its boundaries to ensure its international security while carving out an economic predominance on a global scale.
- China will in time, I suspect, soften its international stance while also ensuring its resource and supply requirements.
- Taiwan will be returned to China at some stage in the future to join Hong Kong and Macau as central parts of a ‘complete’ China.
- Xi Jinping will survive as hegemon for some years, but may well fall to the many internal

enemies he has aroused through his purges of powerful rivals, economic travails (e.g. Evergrande and the property crisis), attacks on the great Chinese entrepreneurs (Jack Ma of Alibaba for instance) and the emerging failure to ensure the rise to the middle class of all Chinese as part of the unspoken bargain of the Party. (I will discuss the ‘right to revolution’ and the ‘Mandate of Heaven’ in a following piece.)

- Australia will lose considerable influence and economic power unless it strategically embraces its future citizenship of a China-dominated world.
- Future cohorts of students and citizens will be impoverished intellectually, economically, and socially as members of what could well become an outlying pariah nation with no clear fit within a China-led, Asia-Pacific-dominated world.

It may be tempting to think that an assertive and even hostile China is a permanent state. I don’t believe so. Hence my comments about President Xi Jinping above. During the last hundred years, for instance, China has seen:

- A crumbling, ineffectual Qing Dynasty fall through revolution in 1912
- A republican government rise under Sun YiXian (or Sun Yat Sen in the old Wade–Giles romanization)
- An era of warlordism that followed
- A Nationalist government, the Guomindang (Kuo Ming Tang) under Jiang Jieshi (Chiang Kai-Shek)
- War—the Japanese invasion of China 1937–45
- Civil War between the Communists and the Nationalists
- The establishment of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) under Mao Zedong in 1949
- Cultural Revolution 1966–76
- Formal recognition by the USA (Nixon) and Australia (Gough Whitlam) in 1972
- The ‘opening up’ of China and the ‘Four Modernizations’ under the great Deng Xiaoping in 1978, which led to the emergence of a capitalist, market economy or ‘socialism with Chinese characteristics’
- China, under President Hu Jintao, welcomes the world to the 2008 Olympic Games and is perceived to be, and was, the most open society in its history.
- Xi Jinping is effectively made ‘emperor’ for life and installs the greatest autocratic and surveillance state in world history. His ideology is declared ‘the essence of the state’, which places him on a par with Mao Zedong.

This summary is to remind us that little remains static in China and if we were to believe that there is no point in preparing for another phase where an

open, cooperative, and benign China, where its immense power will be used in its role as leading world citizen, then I believe we delude ourselves.

The right steps to secure our future are not to be 'the mouse that roared' but to enthusiastically prepare for a new world order in which education, with a strong China component, must play a crucial role. Dealing with China and its economic might will require high levels of China literacy and China-capable professionals at every level of engagement. Only education, with a strong and strategic Asian/Chinese focus, can ensure this happens.

So, let's prepare! Revive Chinese language learning! Give focus to Chinese history, society, and culture. Aim for a key role in China's century instead of becoming a sidelined, declining irritant. Prepare our nation for a future world where our intellectual capital is enriched and ready for a role as the most China-literate in the world and where that preparation may yield spectacular outcomes for successive cohorts of exceptionally well-prepared students. Students who are students of the world and great global citizens with Asia-literate skills and capacities, will ensure Australia's place as an intellectual and economic powerhouse in the Indo-Pacific, enriched through a mutually fruitful, respectful, and friendly relationship with our great Chinese neighbours.



*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.*

## Welfare Report

Our Christmas luncheon, although small in numbers, demonstrated the positive effect that meeting up with colleagues and enjoying a glass or two of wine can have on our members. It was great to hear lively chat and laughter after a year that was certainly challenging!

The year ended with the sad passing of Terry Bourke, a giant of education who will be sadly missed. The number of emails I received about

Terry was fantastic and his eulogy presented at the funeral by Ken Boston, certainly was a moving moment.

Unfortunately, we lost other fabulous colleagues over the last few months: Alan Young and Audrey Mathers.

Our deepest condolences to our executive colleague, John Allsopp, whose wife, Helen, also passed away.

We have had news of colleagues getting COVID and they have been in our thoughts as, unfortunately, at our age, we had hoped that being careful and staying close to our homes, might have kept us safe! Just one personal story: my husband and I, *en route* to see grandchildren in southern NSW, stopped to pick up some doughnuts and lamingtons for the kids. We came out with the doughnuts, lamingtons, and a dose of COVID! Oh well, another reason not to buy doughnuts I suppose! What a shame it was just before Christmas and changed our plans drastically.

We have a few members in nursing-homes and we send our best wishes to their families, who have not been able to see them face to face owing to COVID rules. It has been a very difficult time for many.

Thanks to our members for keeping us updated on some members whom we may have lost contact with. It is great to hear how they are going.

Stay safe everyone.

KERRYANNE KNOX  
Welfare Coordinator

## Valete

Helen Sharpe

11 November 2021

Helen was the wife of Dr Fenton Sharpe.

During all the time that Fenton Sharpe led the Department of Education, there was strong support from home and Helen provided that emotional support. One cannot doubt that Helen was there to listen, sometimes advise, as well as 'accompany him to the many events that we all remember' well.

Helen was also a strong supporter of Stewart House working with the group known as Friends of Stewart House (FOSH).

Alan Young

21 December 2021

Alan Young's passing has been heralded by the following tribute from his dear friend David Maher.

The death of Alan Young occurred in the Hobart Royal Hospital on Tuesday, 21 December. Alan's passing was in consequence of Parkinson's disease and lung complications. Alan had celebrated his 81st birthday on 6 May.

Alan and Leah moved permanently to Hobart on 15 March 2020 to be closer to family.



Alan joined the North-West inspectorate team in January 1979 as its English/History inspector in consequence of a state-wide restructure, the nature and scope of which was written by the Regional Director's team and accepted in its entirety by the Director-General, albeit after some animated negotiations. Alan remained in this position until a further restructuring, which resulted in his appointment as District Inspector, Tamworth North.

A listing of Alan's qualities follows: gentle by nature; always pleasant and bearing an infectious smile; steadfastly loyal and faithful; the bearer of an even temperament; dedicated to his role and functions; totally equipped for his personal and professional duties; a genuine team member; and an exemplary doyen among his colleagues. I was so privileged to have Alan as a team member for most of a decade and never had reason to question his inspectorial judgements and his loyalty and trust. The indelible memory of Alan standing at my office door with his likable and youthful Aussie smile will remain etched in my memory.

Alan had the capacity to generate a high level of application and camaraderie among his personnel. Young and older teachers found a receptive ear in Alan and benefited from his personal wisdom and from his professional skills. His appreciative friend and colleague, John Fox, remembers this capacity thus: *'He was liked and respected by his peers, classroom teachers, and school executive. At the same time, he had a great love for education'*.

John Fox recalls an event that illustrates Alan's calmness in the face of an imminent threat. Driving together to Walgett one Sunday afternoon for inspectorial work in the following week, a tyre blow-out occurred near Burren Junction. John claims Alan's countenance was deathly white as he wrestled with the steering wheel and proceeded to mow down several coolabah saplings. Immediately after this incident Alan was calm, assured, and quick to offer counselling to the distressed driver. Alan indeed had an enviable capacity to exhibit composure under stress.

Ever thoughtful, in 1984 when I was about to depart for New Zealand to undertake the Milford Track Walk, Alan presented me with a book that was written by a veteran walker detailing his experiences on the Track. The book and its inscription remain in the remnants of my personal library, testimony to Alan's thoughtfulness.

Farewell Alan: rest in peace knowing that you were not only a highly respected friend and professional, but also that you were a loving, faithful, and enduring husband to Leah and a caring and inspirational father of Stephen and of Cate. Your family will miss you dearly and will always remember you with immeasurable affection.

**Dr Terry Burke**

28 December 2021

Suffice to say that colleagues remember Terry as a great educational leader, a compassionate man, and an authentic educator. Many of our colleagues worked with Terry and have remained in close contact, so they are mourning their friend and colleague. Terry had personal charisma and a style all his own.

He will be remembered for his outstanding service to public education over many years, starting in 1960. He joins so many great educators whom we have lost recently.

*A Tribute from Dr Ken Boston follows.*

Dianne, Terry's family, friends, and colleagues here at St Mary's Church, and on livestream . . .

We have lost a giant of a man. Terry Burke filled the room with his presence, his humour, his kindness, his inclusiveness, his intelligence. He was a tower of strength and integrity. His sudden death has been a shock and loss to us all.

Terry's professional career fell into two parts. First, his teaching and leadership positions within schools from 1960 until 1975, in primary schools (Connell's Point and Fairy Meadow Demonstration School), and central schools (Ashford, Barraba, and Hillston).

Second, his leadership positions within the school system: as inspector; assistant director; director; assistant director-general for the South Coast; and finally, as Deputy Director-General, with responsibility for teaching and learning within the school system in its entirety (all 2200 schools).

He always said that his role as principal at Hillston Central School, from the early age of twenty-nine, was the most transformative stage of his professional life.

As his responsibilities for the public education system increased, so the educational priorities of the first stage of his career, as a teacher and principal, were reinforced rather than altered. As Deputy Director-General, forty years after he began teaching, at heart Terry Burke remained a teacher and a principal, and he was admired and respected accordingly.

The principals' associations, and the Teachers' Federation, knew that Terry's keel had been laid during his time as principal of Hillston Central School in the seventies, not in Head Office in the later decades of his career.

The depth and ballast of that keel gave Terry his unerring professional centre of gravity; its centre-line and fidelity gave him his unwavering direction and purpose.

Terry never saw himself as a generic public sector manager, or a bureaucrat, or an administrator: he



was an educational leader, leading teaching and learning within the public education system, in the interests of children and the public good. A public servant in the very best sense of the term.

Terry was about curriculum, curriculum support, high quality teaching, school leadership, the professional development of teachers and the provision of support services, to provide quality education for all children and young people, regardless of background or disability.

He questioned the latest educational fads and ephemeral priorities of the day. His focus was on proven and sustainable long-term school improvement, not the quick fix or the daily press release. This was the source of Terry's great authority with Virginia Chadwick and John Aquilina, who trusted his judgement implicitly and respected him greatly; within Head Office; within the Board of Studies; with regions and districts; within schools; with parent and school council organizations; with principals and their associations; and with teachers and the Teachers' Federation.

He had the authenticity that comes from years of school experience, in good times and in bad, in some of the more remote and demanding schools in the state; he had immense knowledge and understanding; his wisdom and practical good sense were renowned; and his commitment to quality education for all was beyond doubt.

Terry was also a thorough gentleman, of the old-fashioned type. In meetings he responded to occasional hyperbole and histrionics with calmness, reason, and evidence; he was considerate and friendly to all; he bore his power and authority with great humility; he cared greatly for the personal welfare of his staff; and he greeted everyone from the Premier to the cleaner with the same polite and warm affability.

At the same time, he could be resolute and immovable. He was a man of great principle. He never failed to speak truth to power, firmly but gently, and always with that crooked smile and the twinkle in his eye.

It has been a privilege not only to have worked with Terry, but to have had him as a close friend, for thirty years. That friendship was far from unusual, and many have known him longer. Everyone here today, physically and on livestream, saw Terry as a friend. Those many friendships have been rich and fulfilling and will be sorely missed by us all. By none will Terry's friendship be missed more than by Cathy Johnstone, who for so many years so ably

managed Terry's schedule, his papers, and his office.

Looking back, I think that the last years of Terry's career, after we returned to Bridge Street, were among the most satisfying years to be in education and training. We faced some mighty challenges, but it was a good time to be alive and to be working with such a wonderful group of people.

With his good humour and friendliness to all, Terry himself was so important in setting the tone, the style, and the culture of the Department at that time. We will for ever remember the Christmas Carols in the stairwell in Bridge Street, with everyone in the building ranged along the old cast iron banisters up several flights of stairs, which reverberated with song. And—although it had nothing at all to do with Christmas—Terry would always lead us in a spirited rendition of 'Danny Boy'.

Dianne and family: We join with you in celebrating the life of this wonderful man, father, and grandpa.

I hope that it is of some comfort to you to know of the love, respect, and affection for Terry that will abide for years to come among his many friends and colleagues.

*Tribute to Dr Terry Burke from the perspective of a Regional Director of Education, David Maher*

Terry was the leader of a team of ten Regional Directors of Education in his capacity as Deputy Director-General of Education. I totally respected his scholarship, his leadership, and his wisdom, as did each of us. It brings tears to my elderly eyes to write about Terry. I admired everything about him, his gentle nature, his unflappable temperament, his sense of devilish but harmless humour, his quiet calmness, his genuine and consistent interest in the progress and development of individuals, his unpretentious graciousness, his knowledge of and his dedication to Education, and his astuteness in leading a diverse group of mature educational minds. In all that he said, he was sensitive to human differences and possessed of a harmonizing capacity. I feel so proud and so privileged to have served under him as a member of his team of Regional Directors. I will miss him dearly as we corresponded regularly. His last email portended a serious but unnamed illness.

Farewell Terry. R.I.P. You fulfilled all the requirements for a worthy man set in concrete by Rudyard Kipling in his poem, 'If'.



**INSTITUTE OF RETIRED SENIOR EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATORS INC.**  
ABN 78 259 388 090

**ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT FOR (PART OF) 2021\***

**Balance sheet: Financial (Part) Year: 1 April to 31 December 2021\***

<b>Assets</b>		<b>Liabilities</b>	
CBA Society Cheque A/c	\$4,849.34	Due to Stewart House	\$0.00
CBA Term deposit	14,000.00	Subscriptions in advance	\$270.00
non-current assets	\$0.00	Expenses owing	\$0.00
Undeposited cheques	\$0.00	Uncashed cheques	\$0.00
		Total liabilities	\$270.00
		Net equity	\$18,579.34
Total assets	\$18,849.34	Equity and liabilities	\$18,849.34

**Income and Expenditure: Financial (Part) Year ending 31 December 2021\***

<b>Income</b>		<b>Expenditure</b>	
Stewart House	\$3,223.50	Stewart House	\$3,338.50
Subscriptions	\$1,800.00	Newsletter (printing)	\$965.74
Other contributions	\$0.00	Newsletter (postage)*	\$385.00
Lunch meeting	\$1,301.00	Lunch meeting	\$1,488.00
		Refunds	\$119.00
		Fees to Fair Trading	\$100.00
		Other printing and postage	\$169.49
		Zoom meetings	\$50.00
Total income	\$6,324.50	Total expenditure	\$6,615.73
		Operating (loss)	(\$291.23)
CF 2020-2021	\$3,076.94		
Transfer – Term deposit	\$2,063.63		
Less operating loss	-\$291.23		
CF 2022	\$4,849.34		

**Reconciliation as at 31 December 2021\***

CBA IRSEA Cheque A/C	\$4,849.34	CBA IRSEA Term deposit	\$14,000
The amount transferred from the previous term deposit at maturity on 19 August 2021 included interest of \$100.26. The current term deposit matures on 30 September 2022.			

**\* Note**

The revised IRSEA Constitution approved on 4 June 2021 changed the IRSEA's previous financial year period (1 April – 31 March) to a new financial year period of 1 January – 31 December.

This Annual Financial (Part) Year Report is a transitioning report that commences from the end of the previous financial year (31 March 2021) and concludes at the end of the newly approved financial year period (31 December 2021). That is, this report is for nine months of 2021.

Ray Gillies  
Treasurer, IRSEA

# AGM Lunch Meeting and Booking-Slip

## 6 May 2022

**Come and join your colleagues at  
The Castlereagh Boutique Hotel, 169 Castlereagh Street, Sydney**

Raechel McCarthy from the DoE will be our guest speaker

**Please note that you can now pay by electronic funds transfer.**

Please complete the lunch booking-slip below and return payment with your cheque (unless paying by EFT) **by 18 April to:**

Ray Gillies, 79 Albyn Rd, Strathfield NSW 2135.

Home telephone number is 0412 763 242. Email: [rcgillies@yahoo.com.au](mailto:rcgillies@yahoo.com.au)

I enclose my payment of \$..... (at **\$60.00 per head**) for the 2 course main meal with bread roll and coffee, tea, and petits fours.

**Please note you may be asked to provide evidence of being doubly vaccinated on your arrival.**

**Your name** (please print):

.....

**Guest's name(s)** (if applicable):

.....

For the above to attend the IRSEA luncheon at 11.30 a.m. for 12.00 p.m. at the Castlereagh Boutique Hotel at 169 Castlereagh Street, Sydney, Friday 6 May.

**Please indicate in space provided if you require a special meal.**

Meal type..... Number required .....

Signed: ..... Date: ..... Phone no. ....

**If paying by cheque** make your cheque to the *Institute of Retired Senior Educational Administrators* and cross it 'Not negotiable'.

*OR*

**If paying by Electronic Funds Transfer the details are:**

**BANK** Commonwealth Bank of Australia

**BSB:** 062300

**ACCOUNT NUMBER:** 10466684

**ACCOUNT NAME:** Institute of Retired Senior Educational Administrators (IRSEA)

**YOUR REFERENCE:** Your surname, initial, and 'meeting'

Money cannot be refunded for cancellations made after **26 April 2022**.

*I agree / do not agree (cross out one) that photographs of me in professional and/or social situations may be published in IRSEA's Newsletters and on IRSEA's website.*

**If you can't attend but would rather join us by Zoom on your home computer, please indicate below with your email and we will send you details on how to connect with the luncheon on 6 May.**

Name ..... Email .....

## IRSEA PRIORITIES 2021–2022

### PRIORITY 1

#### STRENGTHEN RELATIONSHIPS WITH DoE AND CONTRIBUTE MORE EXTENSIVELY TO THE DISCOURSE ON EDUCATION ISSUES

Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	PROGRESS	
			Oct 21	31 Jan 22
1.1 Meet with IRSEA contact officer from DoE to discuss options for IRSEA engagement and dialogue with the DoE and the contribution of IRSEA to policy development and debate. This meeting should also be used to identify issues within the DoE that may affect IRSEA's capacity to engage in policy development and consultative processes.	Graham Dawson Lindsay Wasson	September 2021	Meeting conducted via ZOOM with Raechel McCarthy. Proposals were supported by Raechel who agreed to follow-up with Leanne Nixon and Murat Dizdar.	Meeting with Deputy Secretaries to be arranged for February after peak period for re-opening of schools. Raechel McCarthy contacted to arrange meeting.
1.2 Following the initial meeting with the DoE contact person, follow-up meetings be held with the Deputy Secretaries School Performance (North and South) and the Deputy Secretary Learning Improvement.	Graham Dawson Lindsay Wasson	September 2021	Not yet conducted. These to be conducted after the meeting between Raechel McCarthy and the Deputy Secretaries.	As above in 1.1
1.3 The Executive Committee consider options for engaging more widely in community discussions on education issues and engaging with other relevant education bodies.	Executive Committee	October 2021	Agreed in principle. Detailed actions yet to be considered by EC.  DoE contact person, Raechel McCarthy, has agreed in principle and will discuss the issues with Deputy Secretaries.  Website includes a Forum page and links to other relevant educational sites.	No further action at this time.
1.4 The Executive Committee consider the feasibility and desirability of developing and publishing official IRSEA position statements on select education issues.	Executive Committee	October 2021	Agreed in principle. Details not yet progressed.	No further action at this time.
1.5 IRSEA to include links to DoE website and other relevant education bodies and organisations on its proposed website	Ray Gillies Website Sub-Group	October 2021	Completed. Other sites will be considered.	Completed
1.6 IRSEA to request DoE to place a link to the IRSEA website on its website.	Graham Dawson	October 2021	Discussed with Raechel McCarthy.	DoE did not agree with this request.
1.7 The proposed IRSEA website to include a moderated forum section where members could contribute to discussions on educational issues.	Ray Gillies Website Sub-Group	October 2021	Website includes a Forum page. Kerrie Ikin has agreed to act as moderator, with assistance from others.	Action deferred pending clarification of legal responsibilities of websites for contributor content.



**PRIORITY 2**  
**MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL**

Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	Progress	
			Oct 21	31 Jan 22
2.1 IRSEA representatives to meet with senior DoE personnel to discuss strategies for contacting senior officers who are nearing retirement to provide them with information about IRSEA and invite them to join, initially as associate members, and eventually as full members.	Graham Dawson Lindsay Wasson	September 2021	Initial discussions have been held with Raechel McCarthy. Follow-up action will be undertaken following Raechel's meeting with Deputy Secretaries.	To be discussed further in meeting with Deputy Secretaries in March 2022.
2.2 Lindsay Wasson to prepare a briefing about options for associate or honorary IRSEA membership for the consideration of the Executive Committee and members	Lindsay Wasson	August 2021	Briefing completed. A Consultative Paper was developed and endorsed by the Executive Committee. Copy of the Consultative Paper sent to all members for feedback, which is due by 15 October.	Options to be discussed in February Executive Meeting together with draft paper on benefits of IRSEA membership.
2.3 The Executive Committee to consider strategies to communicate with former TAFE senior educational administrators about membership of IRSEA.	Executive Committee	October 2021	Not yet actioned.	Not yet actioned.
2.4 Executive Committee members to advise of personal contacts within the DoE who could be used to share information about IRSEA to potential members.	Executive Committee Graham Dawson Alan Mills	September 2021	Not yet actioned.	President has prepared a communication to current members asking them to invite potential members to join IRSEA or to provide their details to the President for follow-up.
2.5 Executive Committee to write to all IRSEA members asking them to provide information about and invite eligible colleagues to consider joining IRSEA.	Graham Dawson Brian Davies Alan Mills	September 2021	Not yet actioned. President to prepare letter after the end of the feedback period for the Associate Member Consultative Paper.	As per 2.4 above.
2.6 IRSEA to conduct an audit of membership database to ensure its currency and accuracy.	Graham Dawson Alan Mills	September 2021	Not yet actioned	Kerrie Ikin has agreed to become Membership Officer and audit has commenced.
2.7 In designing the IRSEA website, ensure that the site includes publicly accessible information about IRSEA, its purposes and mission, and the capacity to submit a membership application online.	Ray Gillies Website Sub-Group	October 2021	Achieved. Implemented as apart of website designed	Achieved.
2.8 Commission the development of an IRSEA mission statement.	Lindsay Wasson Executive Committee	September 21	Completed. Mission statement included on the website.	Completed.
2.9 Explore options to enhance the benefits of becoming an IRSEA member.	Lindsay Wasson Janina Sulikowski Kerryanne Knox Executive Committee	December 2021	Initial discussions held between LW and KK. Concept of awards structure and membership symbols discussed with EC and included in Associate Membership Consultative Paper.	Draft paper is being developed and will be considered at February Executive Committee meeting.

**PRIORITY 3**  
**COMMUNICATION WITH MEMBERS**

Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	Progress	
			Oct 21	31 Jan 22
3.1 Current communication strategies be maintained and enhanced with the development of the IRSEA website.	Executive Committee	Ongoing	Website in development.  Consider options for regular communications from the President to members, in addition to the newsletters, at October Executive Meeting.	Website launched.
3.2 A sub-group of the Executive Committee to meet with Ray Gillies to support the design and development of the website.	Ray Gillies Website Sub-Group	Ongoing from August 2021	Implemented.	Ongoing.
3.3 If considered necessary by the sub-group and the Executive Committee, funding be allocated to support the design, establishment and maintenance of the website.	Executive Committee Ray Gillies Website Sub-Group	Ongoing from August 2021	Funding has been set aside for this purpose. Not yet allocated.	Funding has been allocated but not yet used.
3.4 The Executive Committee seek to reinvigorate luncheon meetings and invite presenters to address an agreed theme during 2021–22.	Executive Committee John Allsopp	Ongoing from December 2021	First 2021 luncheon meeting is planned for 3 December. Leanne Nixon has agreed to speak. Awaiting a response from Murat Dizdar. Raechel McCarthy expressed a preference for the two Deputy Secretaries to present together.  Explore option to broadcast presentation for members who cannot attend.	Successful luncheon meeting held in December '21. Leanne Nixon presented, and the presentation has been uploaded to the website.  Meeting was streamed via Zoom.
3.5 The Executive Committee examine the cost and feasibility of presenting luncheon meeting presentations as on-line webinars.	Executive Committee John Allsopp	October 2021	Planning in progress for December meeting.  One ZOOM meeting held in lieu of face-to-face meeting in August. 20 participants who strongly supported their continuation.	December meeting was streamed successfully. However, only two members participated on-line. To be reviewed at February '22 Executive Committee meeting.
3.6 If the Executive Committee agrees to establishing a theme for 2021–22, this theme be used as a basis for some articles for the newsletter.	Executive Committee Syd Smith	Ongoing from October 2021	Not yet actioned.	Not yet actioned.