



INSTITUTE OF RETIRED SENIOR EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATORS, INC.

Newsletter

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www.irsea.org.au

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. 4

November 2022

From the President

Since my last report in the July Newsletter there are a number of developments I trust will be of interest.

Membership

Our membership continues to grow.

On my count we have 14 new members making 2022 a vintage year in our collective drive to expand IRSEA's membership. Our focus on attracting new members will be relentless and is directly in line with the priorities Graham Dawson established as President in 2021–22. A major milestone was also achieved as we recently welcomed our very first Associate Member, Dr Glen Patterson. As you know, associate members are senior administrators, still employed by the Department, who are approaching retirement with (we hope) the ultimate intention of joining IRSEA as a full member upon their retirement. The Associate category is an essential building block for IRSEA's future and I am delighted to see this idea taking off.

Links with the DoE

Our strength and our purpose as an organization are inextricably tied to the NSW Department of Education and TAFE. Our links with DoE, which are becoming stronger and are warmly embraced by senior Departmental officers, help turn part two of our Mission Statement into a positive reality. Murat Dizdar, Deputy Secretary, School Performance, and Raechel McCarthy, Director, Delivery Support (Rel), Student Support and Specialist Programs Directorate, have engaged with us in partnership and facilitated our engagement in policy and implementation input through participation in the regular statewide Capability Summits. Raechel is our key Departmental contact, who, in changing roles recently, asked that she remain our Departmental contact despite the change. For this and for her unstinting support and friendship, I regard her as a true champion of our organization. Likewise, Murat has ensured the way is open for us to play a role of growing influence in Departmental policy development and its implementation. Without



his strong support at the strategic level, we would never get close to fulfilling our mission to deploy 'our intellectual capacity and educational expertise for the betterment of public education in NSW . . .'. Again, I regard Murat as a champion of IRSEA and wish to put on record my deep appreciation for his support and generosity in building a close alliance with us.

Graham Dawson and I participated in the recent Capability Summit on 9 August. Graham joined the Campbelltown group and I joined the Glenfield group under Deb Summerhayes, ED Metropolitan South and West. These were extremely fruitful engagements, particularly in the curriculum session, and according to feedback our input was well received. In his email to me, Murat said:

' . . . great to have you and your good folk supportive and understanding of the work we are leading. We are thrilled to have those who have come before us alongside us—I have had great feedback. May it continue.' (Murat Dizdar, 16 August 2022.)

Our participation continues when a number of Committee members (Eric Jamieson, Kerrie Ikin, Chris Carroll, Brian Davies, Kerryanne Knox, and Lindsay Wasson) will join with all Executive Directors (EDs) and Directors Educational Leadership (DELs) at Parramatta for the Summit on 25 November.

Certificates and awards

With Graham Dawson's more than capable management, IRSEA now has a complete suite of Certificates and Awards. They present as elegant in design, cover all the categories we agreed on, and will honour recipients in a highly professional and stylish way. My thanks to Graham for taking on this task with such drive and commitment, producing a set of accreditations of which our organization can be very proud.

Sub-committees

The task of developing a structure for IRSEA sub-committees (as proposed in the 23 March 2022 paper Janina, Kerryanne, and I wrote) has been iterative and a little slow. However, the Executive

Committee has now approved, in principle, a suite of sub-committees to take carriage of important priorities of IRSEA. The sub-committee working paper will be placed on the website for all members to access, and will be subject to modification in line with members' interests and expertise.

Social events

Thank you, Kerryanne Knox, for initiating and organizing our very first purely social event with no agenda but to have lunch and drinks together on 26 October. This is the start of what we plan will be a regular feature of our future program of events. Dates have been set for two more such events at the Kirribilli Club on 6 June and 11 October 2023. These events hopefully will fulfil a collegial, social purpose that our more formal luncheon meetings only partially satisfy. Next, we need to start thinking about winery visits and other engaging activities to diversify our offerings.



LUNCH AT THE KIRRIBILLI CLUB, 19 OCTOBER 2022

Finally: I wish to thank all members of the very talented and hard-working Executive Committee who do remarkable things behind the scenes for the broader membership. And I thank them, too, for the exceptional support they have given and give me in my presidency. We have a collective desire to continue to make IRSEA a great organization to belong to and an organization that has a seriously positive impact on public education, primarily in this state. There is more to come I can assure you!

LINDSAY WASSON
President

From the Department

Hi all

I hope you are all well and are enjoying the warmer weather. As usual I will use this newsletter section to update you on key reforms happening within our Department of Education.

Our Department has started the process of consultation for the next 2024–28 Strategic Plan. We want



to ensure this plan has authentic staff, student, and parent/carer voice, and to start this process, we are hosting Supporting School Success Forums in Week 7 this term. The forums will provide an opportunity for staff to give input on how our schools need to be supported and be more consistently orientated towards the needs and priorities of our schooling communities. This work will improve how we determine clear areas for strategic focus and strengthen collaboration between our corporate teams.

In other news, schools in 2023 will be supported by a simplified school budget process so that more school time can be invested in higher-value activities supporting improved learning outcomes. I am sure many of you remember the countless hours spent as principals with your School Administration Managers planning the next school year's spending. We now have improved technology to support this planning and in recognition of the immense amount of money schools need to manage to support students. I can also see a positive shift in the evaluation on the impact of this spending.

Our schools are also responding to a large-scale phased implementation of new curriculum which started this year with the K–2 English and Mathematics syllabuses. The features of the new curriculum include:

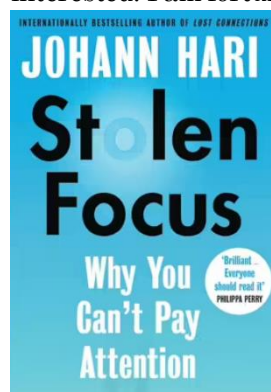
- building strong foundations for future learning by 2022 with new English and Mathematics syllabuses for Kindergarten to Year 2;
- more time for teaching by 2022 by reducing the hours teachers spend on extracurricular topics and issues and compliance requirements;
- strengthening post school pathways by 2022 with new learning areas for Years 11 and 12 that clearly link learning to future employment and study options;
- a new curriculum from 2024 with new syllabuses focused on what is essential to know and do in early and middle years of schooling, and key learning areas in the senior years.

I thought I might also start recommending some good educational readings for those of you who are interested. I am fortunate to get a lot of recommend-

dations from colleagues for useful reading to inform my practice. The challenge is getting the time to read!

Johann Hari's book answers the questions of why we have lost our ability to focus, what are the causes, and how we can get it back. He went on a three-year journey to uncover the reasons why teenagers now

focus on one task for only 65 seconds and why office workers on average only manage 3 minutes. This



has implications for teaching and for our ways of working. I have purchased the book and started to read it. Let's see if you notice my improved attention span next time we meet!

I am very pleased to have a large group of IRSEA members attending our upcoming Term 4 DEL Summit in Parramatta in the coming weeks. Looking forward to connecting with some of you then and other members during the pre-Christmas meeting in Sydney.

All the best.

RAEHEL MCCARTHY

Relieving Director Delivery Support, Student Support and Specialist Programs Directorate
School Performance North



LUNCHEON MEETING, 19 AUGUST 2022

Secretary's Report

It is a time of change for IRSEA. In November members will receive notification by email, and post if necessary, of proposed changes to the constitution resulting from such developments as new membership categories and an altered subscription policy, along with revisions coming from the new Associations Incorporation Regulation 2022. When ready, the new draft Constitution will also be placed on our website (irsea.org.au) on the Welcome page. The revised constitution will then be presented to members for approval at the Luncheon Meeting on Friday 9 December 2022 at the Castlereagh Boutique Hotel. Please make every effort to take part. It is important for our organization and a wonderful opportunity to enjoy meeting up again with colleagues. The booking slip with details is on page 12.

There is a new look next year for the IRSEA calendar of events. In 2023 the Annual General Meeting has been brought forward to March, now that the financial year has been changed to run from 1 January to 31 December. Between the March AGM and the luncheon meeting in August there will be the opportunity to attend a social event for members on Tuesday 6 June 2023 at the Kirribilli Club. A second such event will be held on Wednesday 11 October 2023. Kerryanne Knox, our Welfare Officer, is to be congratulated on initiating

such activities to enhance the value of our organization to members. (The first was held on 26 October this year.)

Much is happening in our organization, and it is important that there is communication with members and that members have the opportunity to provide input and raise questions. You can always contact me on secretary@irsea.org.au if you would like anything raised at Executive meetings (the first meeting for 2023 is on Monday 13 February) or indeed if you would like to be in touch at any time with ideas or issues. With communication, not only do we have our excellent newsletter four times a year (in 2023 in February, April, July, and November), but a website that continues to flourish under the guiding hand of Ray Gillies. By typing irsea.org.au into a search engine (e.g. Google) you arrive at the Welcome Page with our Mission statement and objectives, illustrated by striking pictures. Choosing **Resources** from the menu at the top of the page you can find, for example, the recently added research article by Tony Re on 'The Characteristics of an Outstanding School Principal' along with a range of material such as calendars of events, newsletters, and IRSEA plans and priorities. Off then to **Welfare** where you can see notices about fellow members; there you will also find tributes to members who have passed including Dr Ken Boston's eulogy for Dr Terry Burke. Next, you might go to **Gallery** if you would like to look at photos of fellow members at IRSEA activities, and then there is the **Membership** section, where you can find application forms for someone you might know to become a member. There is much to explore and more being added.

Some key dates for your diary for 2023

Fri. 31 March: Annual General Meeting
Tue. 6 June: Social Luncheon (Kirribilli Club)
Fri. 4 Aug.: Luncheon Meeting
Wed. 11 Oct.: Social Luncheon (Kirribilli Club)
Fri. 1 Dec.: Christmas Luncheon Meeting,

BRIAN DAVIES

Secretary

Treasurer's Report

On 21 October 2022, the IRSEA Society Cheque Account had a balance of \$9,071.40. This includes a recent transfer of \$4,042.80 from our Term Deposit on maturity. The executive committee plans to apply these funds to a number of improved services for members over the next year. The IRSEA Term Deposit of \$10,000 has been reinvested for 12 months with the Commonwealth Bank of Australia at an interest rate of 3.3%.

Regretfully, 16 members have not paid their IRSEA annual subscriptions this year despite reminders.

Those who last paid prior to 2020 have been moved to the former members list and will not receive member benefits unless they reinstate their memberships. Members who are more recently in arrears are sincerely encouraged to remedy their financial status before the end of 2022.

Annual subscription increase from 2023

Members are reminded that the IRSEA Annual General Meeting in May approved an increase in annual subscription fees to \$25 from 2023. This is the first increase since 2007. The increase reflects rising costs and planning for improved services as outlined in the April Newsletter. Annual subscription forms will be emailed or posted to members in January.

RAY GILLES
Treasurer

Stewart House

Following the extended impact of COVID it is exciting to report that Stewart House is now returning to normal operations. This is great news as the help it provides for our most vulnerable children is critical.

From week 3, Term 4, there will be a return to full enrolments. 80 children, particularly from country areas of the state who have not been offered placements for some two years will be placed in the full 12-day program. This is wonderful news as Stewart House has had to run a shorter program, with smaller numbers and particularly for city children, as the COVID impact took its course.

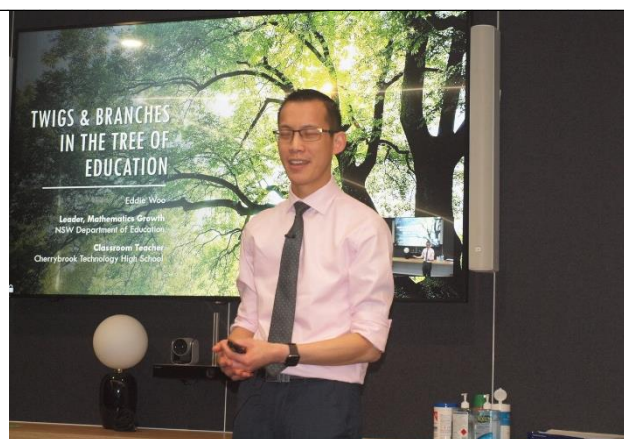
The impact of the restrictions and closures on staff has been immense and we wish them well. Stewart House is dependent on personal and corporate financial assistance to continue its wonderful work. Unfortunately, Stewart House continues to struggle to maintain salary contributions and all assistance is greatly appreciated. Please continue your support. IRSEA looks forward to providing ongoing financial help through donations and fund raising activities.

ALAN LAUGHLIN
Stewart House Liaison Officer.

Did You Miss the Talk by Eddie Woo?

If you missed the talk by Eddie Woo on 19 August at Parramatta . . . No problem! Simply go to our website and download his presentation at www.irsea.org.au. If you haven't been to our website yet please have a look. You will also find it at: <https://youtu.be/2jayRqQMnsw>

There is much more to see while you are there.



EDDIE WOO SPEAKING AT THE LUNCHEON MEETING

Members Write

Oops! Nearly Lost Easter!

Ritchie Stevenson

In my earlier years as an inspector, I found a sense of adventure in accepting Bill Ney's offer of an appointment to Broken Hill. He rang me one day when I was Principal at Lithgow High School and offered me the position of District Inspector, Far West. This included all schools in an area extending from Broken Hill to Tibooburra to Ivanhoe. While I was accepting this offer, Bill interrupted me, advising that I should talk to my wife, Barbara, before he would accept my decision. A wise man! However, having driven home mid-afternoon to talk it over with Barbara (a country lass from Warren and well versed in the ways of the West) we came to an understanding and I returned to accept the offer! So, we shortly set off with our four children on a new field of life's great adventure!

Driving was a clear prerequisite of any appointment to the Far West Inspectorate. Everything is a long distance from everywhere else and I was soon doing a regular circuit: three weeks in town (two high schools, four first class primaries, and two second-class primaries, and two SSPs), and a week out of town (the Tibooburra, White Cliffs, Wilcannia, Ivanhoe, and Menindee circuit), then a three-day trip to headquarters (Bathurst). But they were all interesting schools linked by the Assisted Schools Program and the Disadvantaged Country Areas Program (DCAP). We set up links between isolated schools and lots of interesting programs resulted. We even got Pro Hart to run weekend workshops at remote station clusters!

Then came Easter and a chance to take the kids home to Warren to see their grandma and grandad—a distance of 650 kilometres. Off we set, straight after school, with four excited kids in the car. On reaching Wilcannia (200 kilometres from the Hill) we topped up on fuel at the Shell garage and enjoyed sandwiches and drinks before setting off on the rest of our journey.



LUNCHEON MEETING, 19 AUGUST 2022

Then tragedy hit! About 50 km out of Wilcannia on the Cobar Road we hit a kangaroo. Only a small one, but he went straight under the engine hood and smashed the radiator. The car slewed off the road to the left amid a huge cloud of dust and steam. All suddenly became quiet as we sat there pondering our fate. With my usual candid description of the realities of life I said, 'Well, kids! That's the end of the weekend!'. Only then did the horror of our predicament manifest itself, and they all burst into tears. But as it worked out, my prediction was quite wrong.

You may recall the unusual and long strike of lorry drivers held in 1979. About 7000 drivers objecting to high road-taxes had blocked highways and roadways around Sydney for some weeks prior to Easter. It had been broken only a few days before Easter and many drivers were now hurrying home for Easter. Perhaps some would come our way on the way back to Adelaide. And as we sat there pondering this event, one came our way. As I inspected the damage to our vehicle on the edge of the road, still in a cloud of dust he began to slow down and finally stopped. Yes, the driver was in a hurry to get home to Adelaide but he had a rope I could tie onto the back of the truck and the front of my car. And, yes, he was going through Wilcannia. Such luck on Easter Thursday! I lost no time linking our two vehicles.

After a slow start to check knots and angles, he accelerated up the road. The pace quickened. He was definitely anxious to get home. I hung on to the steering-wheel firmly with both hands as we raced along. Whilst the kids were enjoying the ride, I felt like I was going to overtake him! After a while I gave him a sharp bip with the horn to indicate our predicament. He slowed a little, but it was an anxious 20-minute ride to Wilcannia.

Reaching the main street, we unhitched outside a small closed shop in the deserted street and parted company, both grateful for the successful tow. Round the corner was located the only motel in Wilcannia and, on checking, we discovered there

was only one vacant unit and we were able to carry our bits and pieces around there quite easily.

When checking in with the owner and talking about our smashed radiator, we learnt that we had parked the car outside the one shop in Wilcannia that specialized in replacing radiators. Unpainted front, dirty windows, and dark interior, it had been hardly recognizable! But I was advised to knock on the door no earlier than 9 a.m. the next day to place the problem in the owner's hands. I was wondering who would be working in Wilcannia on Good Friday morning!

Nevertheless, I followed the instructions and returned along the empty streets the next day at a few minutes to 9 a.m. Shortly, an elderly man shuffled into view from the back of the shop and asked to see my car. After a brief inspection of the damage he took me to the back storeroom of the shop where there were stacks of an amazing variety of radiators. Ford, Holden, Morris . . . each brand was in a separate heap. In a few minutes he had identified one that would suit my vehicle. 'Come back in two hours and I should be finished replacing your radiator.'

After breakfast and a walk about the town, we returned to a completed job. Best service in Australia on Good Friday! We paid him, re-packed the car, and set off for Warren 450 km away by about 11.15 a.m. We arrived at Barbara's mother's place in Warren in time for a fish dinner that evening.

And next day off to the rodeo as usual on Easter Saturday afternoon with the kids crawling under the railings to get a better view of the bulls and their riders. So glad that Dad was once again proved wrong about the holiday weekend they were now enjoying!

The Last of the Public Service Inspectors

Laurie Dicker

The recent passing of the Queen reminded me of my only distinction in my life. In September 1969 Noel McClelland and I were appointed to the inspectorate. We had already been through the interview process to be selected, but our appointments still required us to go to Head Office to be interviewed, first by Jack Buggie before meeting with the DG, David Vercoe. Before being confirmed as inspectors we then had to be interviewed by the Public Service Board members, which included Dickinson and Gerry Gleeson, who then had to refer our appointment to the NSW Governor for royal approval. Following the interview by the Board we had to go back to Jack's office to await the call from the Board confirming our appointment.

Following my interview with the Board they threw up their hands and decided they wanted no more responsibility for appointing rubbish like me. From

that day onwards they washed their hands of any future involvement in the appointment of Inspectors of Schools.

As I followed Noel I can claim now that I was the last inspector to have my appointment as Inspector of Schools formally approved by the Queen. Following confirmation by the Public Service Board, Noel and I had to meet with Ted Barker, Deputy Director of Secondary Education, for an induction session. The first matter on the agenda was our application for furniture and stationery for our home office, because in those years the secondary panel worked across the state and had a home office. Ted started by insisting that we apply for the most amount of red tape allowed. Being naive I asked if he really wanted us to tie all files in red tape. Ted explained he never wasted red tape on files. He said, 'It's the best bloody thing to tie up your tomatoes and other plants'.

A few months later I attended a week's conference of new and experienced inspectors at North Sydney, with the main benefit being the ability to purchase duty free wines arranged by Tom Ingersoll. At the final dinner Tom McClaren asked me to give the Loyal Toast. Being a shy, innocent country lad, I had no idea what that meant. I shuddered to think that I would have to give a speech about the Queen. I had to ask Graeme Little what to do and was thankful that all I had to do was call everyone to attention and toast the Queen. I immediately became a confirmed republican.



DIANE WASSON AND GEOFF GEORGE

So where am I now? Twenty years ago Judy and I moved to Buderim, but after a long illness she passed away in 2014. Four years later I met Marjie who, like me, had nursed her husband of 57 years before his death at the same time. We got married under the tree near the lake at Bendooley on the old Hume Highway at Berrima. We have recently moved into the Greenwood retirement village at Forest Glen and are enjoying every minute of our time together. I recently retired as Chair of the Home Owners Committee. I told all the residents that Marjie and I wanted to start a family and our

time with the kids took priority.

I launched the third book in my Detective Harry Taylor series in Wagga last March, where the story is set, and while there I attended the 100th anniversary of Yanco Agricultural High School, where I attended from 1947 to 1951

At a recent farm stay at Kingaroy I sat on the veranda and sketched the outline of the fourth and last in the Detective Harry series. You will have to wait until Christmas 2023 for that book.

Editor's Note: You can obtain copies of Laurie's Harry series through Ingham Sparke. They are also available as e-books through Amazon, Kobe, Barnes and Noble, Apple, and Baker and Taylor. The series includes: Harry, The Ant's Nest; Harry, The Target; and Harry Amazing Grace. All are set in the 1948-49 years.

'SQUAWK'

Garrie Collins



Like cockatoos; teachers, artists, and parents are essentially team players. They learn from each other by observing, listening, imagining, relating, reading, constructing, and engaging actively in contemporary culture. Young people are active learners too. Their schoolbags carry more than working books, technology devices, and a lunch box. They are filled with adventure, anticipation, curiosity, wonder, song, and laughter. Senior students, learn to think critically, venture creatively, and engage collaboratively to develop insights, connections, attitudes, concepts, ideas, and meaning.

Interaction with mates across a range of situations and experiences becomes the foundation for building independent voices with the skills, qualities, and values required by our emerging society.

'Squawk' is my tribute to the amazing work of creative and constructive cockatoos in schools and communities. Perhaps you may wish to join my recognition by participating in this noisy celebration of comical performance, swagger, quawk, swoop, and somersault.

Teachers, artists, and parents, as facilitators of active learning, contribute significantly to our economy, culture, and humanity. More importantly, their inspiration develops the confidence, well-being and optimism our young people deserve.

(On Instagram for recent artworks) @garrie.collins.

Observations on China—Part 3 The Case for NALSAS 2.0

*Lindsay Wasson
October 2022*

Please Note: This opinion piece should be read in the context of my previous three articles in Newsletters 1, 2, and 3 of 2022.

This is the final piece in my set of observations on China and its emerging status as the world's greatest superpower. Of course, it has a way to go but don't underestimate the speed of its coming supremacy. That China will supplant the USA as the world's leading economy, dominant military power, and technological and innovation powerhouse is the foundation stone underpinning my previous opinion pieces. China as hegemon is the reality we must acknowledge and deal with, not within the usual short-termism of political cycles but, in Chinese style, with the foresight of a 30 to 50 year horizon. The big question for us as educators is where does Australia and Australian education fit within this inevitable scenario? My answer? At the centre. If we are not there, we lose on every level.

After a number of years of worsening relations (particularly under Morrison and Dutton), Australia and China are working towards a political and economic reset. At least that is what the new Chinese ambassador, Xiao Qian, China's Foreign Minister, Wang Yi, Minister of National Defence, Wei Fenghe, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Penny Wong, and Minister for Defence, Richard Marles, are working on. Clearly, more is happening at other diplomatic and government levels as well. All of this more nuanced and effective diplomacy is occurring in the context of the 20th National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party held in October, where President Xi Jinping became 'Paramount Leader' for life. This development needs exploration.

'Tianming'—The Mandate of Heaven

For the first time since the Mao era ended and China began its move to modernization under the brilliant Deng Xiaoping, with distributed power at the top, China has once again fully committed to a dynastic, imperial-style autocracy. In this reversion to what had been the norm for millennia before, China has effectively bestowed the 'Mandate of Heaven' on Xi Jinping. Or more accurately, having eliminated political rivals (through purges, 'anti-corruption', and anti-Party trials) and reined

in the powerful entrepreneur-billionaires (through execution, forced redistribution of wealth, and imprisonment), Xi has effectively bestowed upon himself the Mandate of Heaven. In eliminating obvious rivals, Xi appears to have followed the advice to Stalin from his police chief, Beria: '*Show me the man, and I will find the crime*'.

'The Right to Revolution'

However, what is given (or seized) may be taken away. And so it is with the Mandate of Heaven. Under the precepts of Confucius (and their further development by Mencius), emperors have ruled and dynasties have prevailed under the Mandate. But the Mandate is to be enjoyed only by the sage and benign leader who brings peace, prosperity, and virtuous rule to the land and its people. The Mandate is never permanent, and within the ancient concept there lies a parallel teaching—its revocation and the 'right to revolution'. Once a ruler fails to act in the interests of his people, the Mandate is lost and his people may look for another ruler of virtue. This may well be the fate of Xi Jinping. And this is why we need to remind ourselves of the turbulent and everchanging nature of China over the last 150 years.

The inevitable end of the Xi Mandate

One of the key points I presented in my earlier articles was that change—political, economic, social, and diplomatic—has been a constant in modern Chinese history. From Mao the Leninist hegemon to Deng the economic liberalizer took a matter of less than a decade. The leaders after Deng continued on the path to a modernizing, outward-facing nation where capitalism flourished under 'communism with Chinese characteristics'. 'To get rich is glorious' was the catchcry (falsely) attributed to Deng and his shift to the moderate, modernizing right which unleashed the greatest and swiftest changes to a society in all of history. Deng's successors, Zhang Zemin (Paramount Leader 1992–2002) and Hu Jintao (2002–12) maintained Deng's reformist drive for an open, modernizing China. Until Xi Jinping.

Where did Zhang and Hu hail from and why is this important? Both were from the rich, culturally developed, and highly internationalized South. Zhang from Yangzhou (close to Nanjing) and Hu from Taizhou (near Ningbo in the wealthy Zhejiang Province). Zhang and Hu represented one of the dominant factions in the upper echelons of CCP power, the moderates, who have been responsible for a more open and economically successful China. Xi (born in Beijing), on the other hand, is from the relatively poor, educationally more backward, more ideologically hard-line, hard-left, northern culture of China. As this and previous Party history illustrate, the CCP is far from ideologically monochrome. Factions wax and wane. The Mandate can

shift and shift swiftly. There is much evidence to suggest that Xi, and his sharp turn to the far left, are but a passing phase in the emergence of this great country to pre-eminence. While his time as Paramount Leader may last for some years, the massive problems he is now associated with—unemployed youth, a disaffected business class, critics in academia, popular hostility from the harshest COVID restrictions in the world, an aging demographic, a stagnant economy, a failing construction sector—all point to fragility in his Mandate. The tacit pact between the people and the Party, that the people will accept compliance and all the instruments of a repressive, authoritarian surveillance state so long as prosperity and rising living standards are assured, is now threatened and possibly fracturing. The moderates and southern culture will, in my estimation, re-emerge. In time, China will moderate and open up once again, and when it does, we need to be prepared.



TONY RE AND ALAN RICE

Future-proofing Australia—NALSAS, the National Asian Languages and Studies in Australian Schools Strategy

In the 1980s the great reformists, Hawke and Keating, were the first to identify Mandarin, Indonesian, and Japanese as languages of geopolitical importance in their government's *National Policy on Languages*. A grand declaration with no funding. This all changed in 1992 under the Keating government. A COAG working-group, chaired by Kevin Rudd, produced the ground-breaking report, *Asian Languages and Australia's Economic Future*, always referred to as 'The Rudd Report'. NALSAS was COAG's response to this report and there was money attached: \$206.6 million.

Rudd's rationale and objectives were clear. Among them:

- *English will not necessarily remain the natural language of business in the region.*
- *Developing a future Australian workforce, management and general community that is adequately Asia-literate.*
- *A requirement for a greater breadth and depth of languages/cultures skills than in the past.*
- *Australia's future economic success is contingent on improved second languages skills—Asian*

languages skills in particular (Rudd Report 1992, p. 79).

A prescient Rudd noted in 1992 that 'China is likely to move from being our tenth largest market to become our second largest market'. And further, that 'By the year 2025, Japan's share of East Asia's middle and wealthy class consumers will have fallen to around 10% . . . but China, a country we currently think of as very poor, will contain almost 70% of these consumers . . .' (Rudd Report 1992, p. 26). Rudd's rationale in 1992 still resonates today. Indeed, it could well inform and almost underpin the second coming of a NALSAS 2.0 today.

The main task of NALSAS (1994–2002) was: 'to resource and to promote the teaching and learning of Asian languages and the study of Asia in Australian schools'. (Colin Mackerras, NALSAS Interim Report, 1998). The NALSAS Taskforce, set up by COAG and originally chaired by Professor Colin Mackerras, developed and coordinated the strategy with great effect. (I was a member of the Taskforce and Deputy Chair 1999–2001.)

Our department's Curriculum Directorate/Curriculum Support Directorate (which I led from 1994 to 2001) was responsible for implementing the NALSAS strategy in NSW and, as it turned out, for supporting a range of initiatives across the nation. We did this with a brilliant team of expert officers in the Languages Unit, some of them native speakers of Mandarin, Japanese, Korean, and Indonesian. The resources we produced were world-class and the impact we had was profound. A short list of the comprehensive materials and programs we produced tells a wonderful story of creativity, innovation, and collaboration through an integrated-media approach to curriculum support:

CD-ROMs

- Tai Hao Le (1998) with Curriculum Corporation
- China Album (1999) with Planet Learning UNSW
- Japan Album (1996) with Unisearch UNSW.

Student Language Study in Overseas Countries Program (Curriculum Support Directorate)

- Provided up to 500 scholarships in the period 1996–98 for students to pursue in-country study of the priority Asian languages.

HSC On-Line

- On-line, quality-assured curriculum support for students of Japanese and Indonesian. (I was co-founder, member, and Chair of NSW HSC On-Line developed in collaboration with Charles Sturt University.)

Access to Languages via Satellite—ALS

- Statewide access to quality Mandarin and Japanese languages learning in primary schools. Satellite dishes were provided to

regional schools to enable equitable access to these programs. Of this program, Mackerras wrote in his Interim Report 1998: *‘Through the development of these high quality resources, delivered through a medium that is accessible to schools across the State and reinforced by extensive teacher training programs, New South Wales for the first time has been able to guarantee all primary schools access to high quality curriculum in Chinese and Japanese.’*

SBS Chinese and Japanese Language Learning Broadcasts

- The ALS programs were also broadcast by SBS to enhance access to these exceptional learning and teaching resources.

Audiographics

- Korean language study was significantly improved and more accessible through our audio-conferencing and computer links, ensuring students in rural communities the same opportunities as those in metropolitan areas.

Achievements of NALSAS

The net effect of the NALSAS Strategy was profound on Asian Languages learning in NSW and nationally. This is particularly so when the short timeframe of its implementation is considered. In his 1998 Interim Report, Mackerras proudly pointed to these achievements among many:

- Within the three years from 1994 to 1997 the number of primary and secondary government school students who learnt the four NALSAS languages increased by 50%.
- ‘No other country . . . has made an even remotely comparable effort to equip itself to learn about the countries of Eastern Asia and thereby engage and communicate with those Asian peoples.’
- ‘Japanese is now the most widely taught language other than English . . . Australia has far more young people learning Japanese, per head of population, than any other country in the world except Japan itself.’
- ‘Australia is a front-runner in the learning of Chinese in school.’
- ‘In no country, other than Indonesia, is Indonesian taught so widely in school as in Australia.’

And so might Mackerras be proud. And so might Keating, Rudd, NSW DET, and all the other jurisdictions that elevated our capacity to be a genuine citizen-country of Asia. A national strategic intervention, enthusiastically and expertly supported by curriculum teams across all states, engineered a profound shift in our Asia literacy, languages capability, and our future engagement in Asia as a nation and as a people. That is, until the Howard government’s widely criticized axing of the program in 2002.



LUNCH AT THE KIRRIBILLI CLUB, 26 OCTOBER 2022

It’s Time for NALSAS 2.0

Twenty years on, and despite a half-hearted attempt to resuscitate Asian languages and studies in the [National Asian Languages and Studies in Schools Program \(NALSSP 2008–12\)](#), study of the priority Asian languages languishes. And yet China rises inexorably and we are facing a China-dominant domain in the Indo-Pacific area with completely inadequate capacities to properly deal with it. Some might see Xi Jinping’s elevation to equal status with Mao as reason to be wary of a renewed focus on Mandarin-learning in our schools. I see the opposite. Some might be wary of such a move as students of English-speaking background find a scripted language like Mandarin a difficult language to learn. Yes, Mandarin is not the easiest of languages to learn. Some believe there are now enough Mandarin-background speakers in Australia to more than fill the capability gap Rudd identified in his Report. They are wrong. We need an Australia-wide, inclusive and highly focused national intervention to ensure our people have all the tools and capabilities fit for the changing circumstances we face.

In the lead-up to this opinion piece I have explored the many historical, social, ideological, and economic factors that have led us to a world where American power is on the wane and China’s is on the rise. I have shown reasons for the ambivalence Australians feel about seeing their nation as ‘Asian’. I have argued, hopefully to your satisfaction, that the current swing to the hard left under Xi is more than likely a transient phase given modern China’s ideological fluidity. Hence my thesis, that a China strategy, with a long-term horizon, driven by a committed national government, is essential if we are to thrive in our Indo-Pacific world. At the moment we are hopelessly deficient.

- *Question:* How many current political leaders are fluent in Mandarin? None except for Rudd.

- *Question:* How many business leaders understand the nuances of managing relationships with Chinese counterparts? Few, but Andrew Forrest is a standout.
- *Question:* How many understand the importance of 'guanxi', face, shame, reciprocity in dealings and relationships? Extremely few.
- *Question:* How many Australians with dealings or business in China are considered by their Chinese contacts, Zhongguotong (China expert with deep and sensitive understandings)? A handful at most.
- *Question:* How many of our citizens have any real understanding of China's recent history and the forces that have shaped China and the Chinese people over the last century? Not enough.

In other words, we completely lack any serious ability to engage successfully with China and the Chinese on any useful level. This is a national disgrace and a catastrophe in the making. We urgently need to redress this. And we need this redress to be inspired, relentless, with national leadership committed for the long-term and with funding appropriate for the massive task ahead. While Korean and Japanese could still be of the languages equation, we should concentrate on Mandarin especially, but with some focus also on the language of our nearest neighbour, Indonesia. Future-proof our country and our people. Build our bridges and cement our relationships. We have done this in the past and we know how to do it again. We just need the political will and the boldness of vision to take us to a future where a NALSAS 2.0 has played its crucial role in re-shaping our society. As Kevin Rudd said in 2007:

Education must lie at the core of our long-term strategy for our national security given that China and India will transform the global strategic, economic and environmental order by the middle of the century.

His words in 1992 and 2007 are as compelling now as then. It's time, and time is not our strongest ally. Advocacy, altruism, clear-eyed strategic vision and national political commitment may well be. My professor and tutor, Manning Clark, once quoted Dostoyevsky from *The Brothers Karamazov*:

'I want to be there when everyone suddenly understands what it has all been for.'

I want to be there when I see and understand what all the work around a NALSAS 2.0 has been for—a nation transformed and fully Asia-capable.



CD-ROMS PRODUCED WITH NALSAS FUNDING BY NSW CURRICULUM SUPPORT DIRECTORATE

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.

Valete

Ian Scott

It is with sadness that we inform you of the passing of our colleague, Ian Scott. His son, Graham, informed us that Ian had passed away on the 22 May 2022.

Ian was a strong person who fought cancer for a very long time and lived until he was 92 and a half years old, a great achievement!

As a science teacher, Ian was appointed to Cooks Hill Intermediate High School, Newcastle, in 1951, and then transferred to Cowra High School in 1953. Despite spending six years in Cowra, his move to Monaro High School was met with excitement, as Cooma was a very interesting place to be a teacher during the building of the Snowy Mountains Hydro-Electric Scheme. This experience led him to be appointed as a NSW Science Inspector where he toured the state for three years.

Back to Sydney in 1970, he was appointed to the then St George Area where he worked in Personnel and was also given the job of travelling to the USA to recruit teachers. He did such a great job that he was promoted in 1975 to Head Office as Staffing Director for Secondary. In 1980 he chose to return to schools in Met West as Director and finally completing his career as Director Personnel, retiring from the Department in 1987.

Greg Prior

It is with deep sadness that we inform you of the death of former Deputy Director General, Greg Prior.

Greg was a devotee of public education and worked tirelessly in its service. He served the Department of Education as a teacher, executive, principal, consultant, superintendent, regional director, and deputy director-general.

Greg fought a long, hard battle with cancer, but that didn't stop him from enjoying all of the wonderful things that we look forward to in retirement—travel, time with family and friends, pursuing an interest in sport (he loved the Swans), and, in Greg's case, playing his beloved guitars.

Throughout his illness Greg served on the Talent Development Project Board as well as on the Stewart House Board of Directors. He had a great interest in both of these groups and was a well-respected member of both.

More importantly, Greg was a 'nice bloke'—he was down to earth and loved to socialize. He was a beloved father and a fun grandfather, and he will be dearly missed.

Our condolences to his wife, children, family, friends, and colleagues.

John Power

John entered onto duty in 1951 and spent many of his early years at Richmond High School where he was a very respected mathematics teacher. His students loved him and the subject, a rare combination, but so satisfying for the teacher and the students.

He spent some time as head teacher at Seven Hills High School before he became the Deputy Principal at Windsor High School. His skills at developing rapport with his maths students transferred to his leadership roles. The students quickly learnt that John cared and showed great compassion for all.

In 1972 John became a Secondary Inspector of Mathematics, and during the 1980s was well established in the Liverpool Region. His job was to

make sure that mathematics was taught at a high standard, and he visited schools and met with hundreds of teachers, inspiring them with his knowledge and ideas. Many of our IRSEA members worked with him and remember him well.

That school in the next life is certainly filling up with our outstanding people: they just got another teacher who inspired many young people. What a shame age limits our time and energy as John Power today would have given Eddie Woo some competition!

The funeral was held on Friday 2 September at 12.30 at Mary Mother of Mercy Chapel, Rookwood.



BARRY LAING AND LINDSAY WASSON AT THE KIRRIBILLI CLUB,
26 OCTOBER 2022

Lunch Meeting and Booking-Slip

Friday, 9 December 2022

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

Please complete the lunch booking-slip below and return payment with your cheque (unless paying by EFT) **by 21 November to:**

John Allsopp
3 Slade Ave
CASTLE HILL NSW 2154

Home telephone number is (02) 8677 3156. Email: johnallsopp@optusnet.com.au

I enclose my payment of \$.65.00..... (at **\$65.00 per head**) for the 2 course main meal with bread roll and coffee, tea, and petits fours.

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 9 December.**

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 **28 November, 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 9 December.

Name Email.....