



IRSEA NEWS

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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, Australia, and beyond.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

ERIC JAMIESON



As we journey into the 2nd half of the year it is a valuable reflection point to appreciate life and the wonder of what lies ahead. From an IRSEA perspective, as always, much has been happening.



*"How did it get so late so soon? Its night before its afternoon.
December is here before its June.
My goodness how the time has flown. How did it get so late so soon?"*

Dr Seuss

It is very easy to overlook the experiences we have shared and the achievements that have been made as we inevitably look forward to what lies ahead. However, without appreciation and celebration of each day of this adventure we share, great intentions can become a source of pressure, and, at times, even anxiety or frustration. I am grateful for the perspective that seems to come with advancing years, bringing with it a greater capacity to find balance and value the moments we live, those we have lived, and the ones that are to come.

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Upcoming Events

- 4 August: IRSEA Luncheon
Castlereagh Boutique Hotel
- 12 October: Committee Meeting
Castlereagh Boutique Hotel

President's Report (continued)

I mention such a reflection because of the joy I see in others, and experience myself, through participation in IRSEA. The collective commitment to our Institute is strong.

Perhaps it is best captured by sharing insights into the pleasure of chairing our executive meeting on 26 June. The first thing to strike me at the meeting, as always, is the combined intellect and experience of the team. Quite extraordinary.

The discussions, ideas, and perspectives members shared were fascinating and stimulating. Yet, the meeting represented much more than an exchange of thinking, an assessment of progress, or even musing over plans for future actions.

It was filled with personal reflections, overflowing with warmth and care for each other, and driven by a shared moral imperative for a purpose greater than any of us individually. There were stories that came direct from the heart of contributors, bringing to life the delight of rich and relevant memories, mixed with humour, laughter, and great appreciation for the power of the group dynamic and the roles entrusted to us. All are anchored in the love and belief for the young people in schools who, to this day, remain the focus of our collective endeavour.

While we took detours through the agenda and liberties with allocated time, what was gained was something much greater than can be represented in minutes. It will continue to benefit us throughout our journey together.

Thought Leadership

The power of our collective voice as an Institute was highlighted in the last edition of IRSEA News. Our potential to provide educational thought leadership that is unencumbered is a unique position held by our organisation. Our members remain steadfastly committed to learning and education. Many continue to be actively involved in the profession, at local, national, and international levels. There is also a general overall interest in the current state of education, contemporary developments, and future possibilities. This offers a powerful perspective when combined with extraordinary life, leadership, and educational experience.

We are in the preliminary stages of development of a number of initiatives in which we can engage to bring substantial value to education in NSW public schools. These include:

- Advocating for outstanding NSW public schools in the World's Best School Prizes.
- Exploring a collaboration with retired principal groups who also remain active in support for NSW public education, through our great friend Chris Bonnor.
- Liaising with Murat Dizdar, Secretary, NSW Department of Education and his wonderful delegate and regular IRSEA News columnist, Raechel McCarthy.
- Participating in Capability Summits involving senior Departmental Leaders, Directors, Educational Leadership, and Principals, School Leadership.

Congratulations to Murat Dizdar on his appointment as Secretary, NSW Department of Education

On behalf of IRSEA, it is wonderful that an outstanding educator has been appointed to the pivotal leadership role for NSW public education.

Following is our IRSEA Member Profile on Murat.

Member Profile on Murat Dizdar, Secretary, NSW Department of Education

Adapted by Syd Smith from an article published in the Sydney Morning Herald of December, 2018.

IRSEA proudly welcomes Murat Dizdar as one of its new Honorary Members. Recently appointed Secretary of the NSW Department of Education by new Minister of Education, Prue Car, Murat has shown that a successful career path is still possible for a classroom teacher to become the state's most senior education officer.



A Sydney Morning Herald article of December 14, 2018 outlined his impressive rise due to a prodigious work ethic, learnt from migrant parents, and the opportunities he was given as a student and teacher by the education system he now runs. These are the opportunities he wants others to have.

Murat began contributing to his parents' finances at the time he was seven, when he got a job at a Turkish deli. It was the first job in what would become an eclectic CV, ranging from waiter and shop assistant to fitness instructor and garbageman. Often, he would work two jobs at the same time, while still teaching in the day. His early teachers could see he was bright and drew his parents' attention, first to the opportunity class test, and then to the selective schools' one. While at Fort Street High he loved the competition and extracurricular activities. The Department is now reviewing the entrance test, trying to find a way to ensure students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds have the same chances as the wealthier ones, who have the funds to be trained for the test.

"It was meant to pick up kids like me from a very disadvantaged background- and grow that talent and ability", he says. In the HSC, he came first in the state in 3 Unit Geography and second in 3 Unit Economics. His tertiary entrance rank was 99.5, providing him with a golden ticket to every university course.



Murat's first teaching job, after studying law, was a social sciences teacher at Ashcroft High, when he juggled with the garbage run. He then advanced quickly, becoming a head teacher at Belmore Boys High, then deputy principal, then principal of Punchbowl Boys High.

"My philosophy is you've got to be a great educator, a great human being, and willing to serve", he says.

On teaching, he has this to say: "When you are a high school teacher standing in front of young people five times a day for 60-minute lessons-there are not many professions that ask you to do that. You have to be a believer in the job, a believer in young people; you have to stay sharp and informed. I think broader society should show greater respect for that." Murat still slips into schools and continues his hand at teaching.

He strongly believes that what our public education system provides within the school gates is just as good, if not better, than anywhere else.

"If we want our system to be the country's best, it's going to be the best of outcomes for the young people we serve. I'm a product of the system. I saw the transformative power of that."

It's gratifying to know our public education system is in the hands of an outstanding, school-experienced educator and leader who understands the challenges we face. Murat is caring to the needs of students and has an understanding of the day-to-day rigours of skilled teaching and learning. Murat's career demonstrates clearly that good teachers with the right work ethic are still able to become future leaders in the state education system.

If you have a nomination for a member profile, please let us know and we will publish it in a future IRSEA News.

THE NSW DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

AN UPDATE ON DEVELOPMENTS

from Raechel McCarthy



Hello colleagues

I hope you are all well and are managing to stay warm in this chilly weather. I was in Canberra last week visiting Queanbeyan Education Office and picked the coldest night to visit since 1986! It was minus 7 degrees, and I was sure the hotel air conditioning wasn't working!

For this newsletter I thought I would provide an update on the key directions outlined by our new substantive Secretary of Education, Murat Dizdar at a recent SPC state conference. How wonderful to have such a strong advocate for IRSEA at the very top of our organisation!

Our new Secretary is committed to using his experience as a past principal and teacher (he started teaching at Ashcroft HS) to bring an educator's perspective to the job. He recognises the importance of authentic collaboration with education partners such as the PPA, SPA, SEPLA, P&C and AECG in bringing about sustainable positive change.

Murat then outlined his perceptions of the pressing challenges our department currently faces starting with the long overdue cultural change breaking down the "us and them" between school based and corporate staff. He wants us to scrap the term 'corporate' as the work done in our centre offices is really work to support principals and schools.

Department Update (continued)

Murat is also determined to address the 'four Ws': workload, workforce, wages and wellbeing. To achieve better outcomes for our 800,000 students we need educators to feel valued and feel the department is 'in their corner'. We are committed to rebuilding the workforce using a temporary workforce transition project where long term temps are given the option of permanency. My sister-in-law out in Dubbo has already benefited from this initiative being made permanent at Dubbo Distance Education following 15 years of temporary employment. The flow on effects of this reform in terms of job security for families is immense.

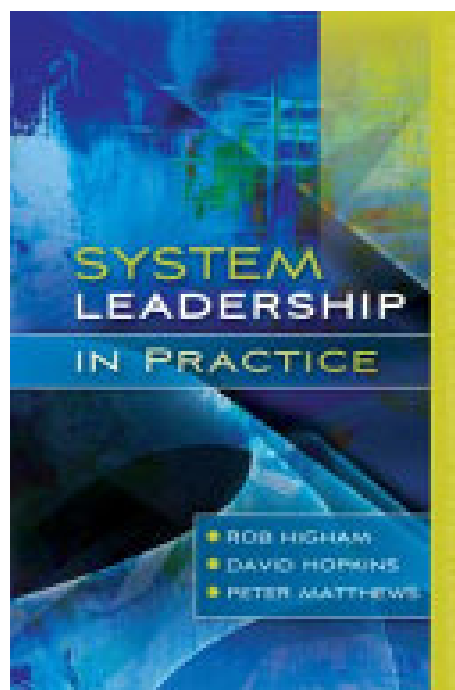
Murat has also been working with the Teachers Federation on positive amendments to the staffing agreement and is addressing teacher workload with a "line by line" review of department policy aiming to combine policies and critically examine what this policy looks like in a school setting.

The review of the Behaviour Strategy has been welcomed by schools and the intention is for Term 3 to include consultation on revisions to the policy with immediate implementation in Term 4 2023. I believe it is critical that the new policy doesn't take a backward step in terms of setting expectations for inclusive education and hopefully reducing the over representation of Aboriginal students and students with a disability receiving suspensions.

A new Staff Wellbeing Strategy will be released later this month aiming to address the underlying factors impacting on staff wellbeing and management of psychosocial hazards and risks. It will mean greater access to WHS staff working within the school's gate to provide targeted advice and support.

Equity will be the main focus of our new Strategic Plan, aiming to reverse statistics such as one in two of our students who are now in the two most disadvantaged SEA quartiles and to continue closing the gaps for Aboriginal and regional, rural and remote students. It is obviously an exciting time to be in education and it would be great to invite Murat along to an IRSEA meeting to hear more about all of this work.

Before I sign off, as usual, I will let you know what I am currently reading to expand my leadership knowledge. The book "System Leadership in Practice" by Rob Higham, David Hopkins and Peter Matthews offers advice on how system leaders can bring about positive change across schools by developing rigorous partnerships, taking risks and deploying resources creatively in order to build sustained improvements in learning and wellbeing. Very good insights to inform my own practice as a Director.



Take care and hope to catch up with you all in person soon.

Regards

Raechel

COMMITTEE REPORT UPDATES

Treasurer's Update: Ray Gillies

On 30 June 2023, the IRSEA Society Account had a balance of \$10,091.16. Our Term Deposit was at \$10,230.16 (maturing 14 October 2023).

This year to date, IRSEA 2023 receipts comprise:

- \$2,610 in members' subscriptions,
- \$2,332 in members' donations to Stewart House, and
- \$2,860 in payments for lunches at general meetings.

IRSEA expenditures were:

- \$2,407 transferred to Stewart House,
- \$3,140 for meeting lunches and technical equipment,
- \$695 costs of our Newsletters (including the follow-up survey),
- \$50 NSW Fair Trading fee, and
- \$104.90 for postage and stationery.

Ray Gillies
IRSEA Treasurer

Secretary's Update: Brian Davies

The involvement of members is important for our organisation and communication is essential for that to happen. If members wish to be in contact with me, then please use the email address secretary@irsea.org.au. If I am away for any extended time, as I was recently, then any email on that address can be monitored and any relevant action taken. It is important for us to hear from you. It is good to know your views on what is happening and information that is of interest to the membership. Please do this at any time throughout the year, including just before executive meetings if you would like anything raised then. Our next Executive Meeting is planned for early October.

Another valuable forum is our newsletter; you are encouraged to write something to share with other members. Please also make sure you visit our website <https://irsea.org.au/> which is another point of communication. Ray Gillies has done a great deal of work on this site which is very much appreciated. Recently he has added a list of the Past Presidents of our organisation going back to 1976. This should be of great interest to many. Just download the website, click on "Resources" to open up the drop-down menu, then choose "Directory" and you are there - many memories.

While you are at the site why not explore other parts of the site - you could have a look at the remarkable gallery with its striking photographs of your colleagues enjoying themselves. I would be very interested to hear your reactions to the website or of any difficulties you have in accessing the site.

This newsletter contains important information on nominating others to receive an award for Outstanding Service as well as nominations for Honorary Membership and Life Membership. Please think about who you consider should be nominated. The forms and how to do this are on pages 18-22.

The nominations are to come to me but if you would like any help or advice about the process don't hesitate to contact me. Those who have contributed to our organisation, and remember that they do so voluntarily, deserve recognition.

One member who is to receive an award at our 4 August Meeting is Vincent Delany who has made such an outstanding contribution to our organisation. It would be wonderful to have as many members there as possible at the Castlereagh Boutique Hotel. It is a venue that our members enjoy.

COMMITTEE REPORT UPDATES

Secretary's Update (continued)

The luncheon booking slip is on page 24.

After a decision by members at the December 2022 meeting, this is the first year that we have held four meetings. Supporting this decision is important. A reminder for your diaries is that our December luncheon meeting is on Friday 1 December, also at the Castlereagh Boutique Hotel.

Another first this year are the social events at the Kirribilli Club. Thank you to our Welfare Coordinator for organising these. They have gone very well – the food and drinks are of a high quality and reasonably priced. The next scheduled luncheon is Wednesday 11 October, 2023 so come along for a good, relaxed time with other members. I also hear there might be a wine-tasting experience on the horizon.

Brian Davies
IRSEA Secretary

Stewart House Update: Alan Laughlin

Stewart House is now operating at full capacity, but unfortunately is projecting a loss in excess of \$500,000 this year. Currently there are 8,000 teachers who contribute through the salary contribution scheme, **but this number is falling**. Clearly considerable work needs to be done to bring contributions and income to a long-term sustainable level. A new promotional video to be shown in all schools has now been completed and is in the final editing stage.

I had the pleasure of seeing this recently and it is excellent. It includes input from the new Secretary, Murat Dizdar, as well the President of the NSW Teachers Federation, Angelo Gavrielatos. Importantly the President of the PSA has also had input pledging support, as have the Principals Councils.



COMMITTEE REPORT UPDATES

Stewart House Update (continued)

This powerful endorsement is designed to crank up school level support and will be released in week 3 of term 3 for all schools. I hope we can get this for our website for all members to see. The video seeks donations and also entreats every public school principal to encourage one staff member to become a Stewart House Ambassador and, as such, provide a conduit for all marketing, promotional and workplace giving materials to enter the school community.

While enrolments at Stewart House are now at pre pandemic levels, COVID, of course, remains an ongoing threat and children are closely assessed and monitored. During the challenges of the last few years a significant number of non-teaching staff have turned over and inservice training and monitoring of all staff is also a significant challenge.

Clearly donations are most welcome and this can be done through IRSEA in the normal way.

Bank: Commonwealth Bank of Australia

BSB: 062300

Account number: 10466684

Account name: Institute of Retired Senior Educational Administrators (IRSEA)

Your reference: Your surname (for a receipt if required), initial, and 'SH'

If contributing by cheque make your cheque to the Institute of Retired Senior Educational Administrators and cross it 'Not negotiable'. (With a note confirming it as a donation to Stewart House).

This can be sent to:

Ray Gillies
IRSEA Treasurer
79 Albyn Road
Strathfield NSW 2135

Thanks for your support
Alan Laughlin



HONORARY MEMBER

HIS EXCELLENCY, AMBASSADOR JOHN AQUILINA A.M., U.O.M.

or Wonders, Wine and Wins when Members Meet for a Meal
by Lindsay Wasson

A fine autumn day in April. Location? The refurbished Bridge Street DoE Head Office, now the smart Capella Sydney Hotel. Inside, a small group of eight, including three IRSEA members - Dr Ken Boston, Dr Alan Laughlin and Irina White along with His Excellency, John Aquilina, Ambassador to Brazil for the Republic of Malta. Purpose? Reunion and reminiscing, connection and conviviality at the stunning Brasserie 1930. Consequence? No doubt there were many but, for us, the key one was the phone call I received from Irina White, from that very Brasserie 1930 luncheon, to say that John Aquilina wished to join IRSEA.

And so it was that, almost immediately, I found myself on the phone with John who expressed his great wish to re-connect with the departmental people who meant so much to him from his time as Minister for Education and Training in the 1990s. He saw that by becoming a member of IRSEA, a sure way to make that wish a reality was in sight. Needless to say, I was absolutely delighted to speak with him and to hear the genuine and quite humble way in which he explored with me the possibility of joining up. With the recent expansion of our membership categories, there was a way - nominate John Aquilina for Honorary Membership.

Nominated and seconded by Alan Laughlin and me, the proposal was put to a delighted Executive Committee and unanimously approved. Process complete!

On behalf of the Committee, I wrote to Ambassador Aquilina in Brazil. Parts of that email of 7 May are set out below:

'As Minister for Education in NSW, you were and are still regarded with the highest respect and esteem for the passionate, innovative, and supportive leadership you brought to public education in this state. You also brought a deep respect and regard for the officers who served you and your government. They, in turn, responded with great loyalty and dedication to you personally and to your reform agenda. Your personal touch is well known. During discussion on your nomination, it was mentioned that at the time of the large fire at Holroyd High School, it was you who made the first personal call to the principal to check on what could be done to support her and the school. Such things are never forgotten.

Ambassador Aquilina, we feel honoured that you wish to reconnect with those who worked with you. That you wish to be part of an organisation that places a premium on collegiality and friendship for members is wonderful, but that you also wish to support us in our renewed focus on influencing the direction of public education in this state is magnificent.

Ambassador, welcome to IRSEA! We are thrilled you are now a member and we sincerely trust you will find your membership enjoyable, fulfilling, and professionally satisfying.

Honorary Membership (continued)

In the meantime, and on behalf of the Executive of IRSEA, I wish you all the best in your posting to Brazil. We all look forward to renewing our association with you on your return to Australia.'

Ambassador Aquilina responded on 8 May in gracious style: *'I am thrilled by the honour extended to me by the Executive Committee... Although I am physically a long way away, I look forward to maintaining a close and mutually beneficial relationship with IRSEA and its members.'*

Kindest regards

John

I have no doubt that John Aquilina will enrich our Institute and help take us to new levels of influence in the ever-evolving education landscape of this great state.

Lindsay Wasson

Immediate Past President



Ambassador John Aquilina

Education Items: Summaries prepared by Syd Smith

Rich School, Poor School

by Jane Caro

Jane Caro mentions Prof Barry McGaw from Melbourne University Graduate School of Education in her introduction where he says "Australia is significantly less equitable than the OECD average. We were a high quality, low equity performer but our quality is going down and our equity is not improving. What drags us down (our results) is we don't look after the lowest performers."

Professor Jane Kenway of Monash University agrees, adding that the Australian school system is the most privatised in the world.

Caro, who co-authored *The Stupid Country* with Chris Bonnor, describes the double standard applying to our different school systems. Violent incidents in public schools must be reported and statistics are made public, leading to negative headlines about chaos in in our public schools every year.

Jane Caro (continued)

Unless leaked in some other way, incidents in private schools can remain private. In addition, public schools are meant to be funded 80 percent by state governments and 20 percent by the Commonwealth. Private schools receive the reverse, plus fees and tax-deductible donations. If this trend continues says Caro, no public schools outside the ACT are expected to reach more than 90 percent of their schooling resource standard (SRS)- that is the resources a school needs to do its job adequately in the foreseeable future. By contrast, some private schools are funded at 200 percent of the SRS. Since public schools overwhelmingly educate those students with the highest level of needs and their numbers are growing, it is horrifying that none of them is at their full SRS.

Trevor Cobbold, national convenor of Save Our Schools believes funding systematically favours private schools. Considering the concentration of the neediest students who are so much more expensive to teach, they can be contrasted to the situation in private schools where funding has increased at three times the rate for public schools over the last decade. Jason Clare, the Federal Education Minister, is keenly aware of this funding gap and likens it to children from disadvantaged backgrounds as the “emergency wards of Australian education”.

Caro believes we must go back to the original intention of the Gonski review into school funding when it was first convened, and to implement a transparent, needs-based, sector-blind, school funding scheme. Another proposal by Bonnor and Greenwell in their book *Waiting for Gonski*, is that all schools,

whoever runs them, should be publicly funded and while they may keep their religious character, must abide by the same rules as public schools regarding enrolments and zoning. This is what happens in both Britain and New Zealand.

Some other interesting models cited were from the Netherlands where 70 percent of schools are privately managed, but all schools receive the same funding. While in Alberta, Canada, where schools receive the same funding but taxpayers nominate the type of school they want some of their taxes to fund, provided they send their own child to them.

Caro warns it's past the time for change or, as Kevin Bates, Federal Secretary of the Australian Education Union says: “An entire generation of students has been let down by governments who knew what was needed and failed to deliver.”

Acknowledgement: Jane Caro; The Saturday Paper; Schwartz Publications; Collingwood, Victoria, June 10-16, 2023.



Why School Segregation Is A Problem

by Michael Sciffer

Decades of research has shown how family social background is a strong predictor of a child's educational outcomes. Parents' education and occupation are associated with student learning differences in Australia and many other countries.

Governments across the world have responded with policies directing resources to students from disadvantaged backgrounds. An example is Australia's "Gonski" school funding model, which targets additional resources to First Nations, rural and remote, and low socio-economic students.

But the issue of school segregation is largely ignored by Australian governments.

School segregation occurs when socially disadvantaged students are not evenly spread across schools. Rather, students tend to enrol in different types of schools according to their social backgrounds. This means advantaged children are concentrated in certain schools and disadvantaged students are concentrated in others.

Research has also shown the social background of students' peers influences their learning just as much as their own social background. So, when disadvantaged students are concentrated into disadvantaged schools, they are doubly disadvantaged.

Australian secondary schools are the ninth most socially segregated among wealthy countries.



Michael Sciffer

We also have the fourth-highest proportion of private school attendance in the OECD.

Their research

Last year, the writer and his colleagues examined the effects of school segregation on students in Australia.

They used NAPLAN results from a nationally representative sample of students in years 5 and 9 to explore the relationship between average school socioeconomic status and an individual students' academic growth. This involved students from public, private and Catholic schools.

They also examined the effects of parental education and occupation, Indigenous status, language, gender, school sector and the academic achievement of peers on a student's academic growth.

Their findings

They found a school's socio-economic status predicts the likelihood a student will achieve minimum literacy and numeracy benchmarks. This means a disadvantaged student attending a disadvantaged school is unlikely to achieve minimum academic benchmarks.

Michael Sciffer (continued)

The same type of student attending an advantaged school is twice as likely to reach minimum standards.

Attending a disadvantaged primary school costs half a term of learning per year for every student. This grows to one term of learning per year in secondary schools.

The stronger high school effect is likely due to higher levels of segregation at the secondary level (that is, more students go to private high schools than private primary schools).

This shows going to a private school can benefit a student's academic performance when it has higher concentrations of socio-economically advantaged students than nearby public schools.

The outcome is a schooling system that excludes many students from academic excellence. In other words, Australia's schooling system exacerbates social inequality.

Acknowledgement: Michael Sciffer; Murdoch University; The Conversation; June 15, 2023

***Do you have a view or comment on these two articles?
Please let us know and we can start a discussion.***

MEMBERS' CONTRIBUTIONS

A Theme on "Come From Away" by Ricthie Stevenson

At the end of last year Barbara and I saw the musical show, "Come from Away". The theme of this musical is a little unusual and yet surprisingly effective. It tells the story of travellers grounded in the remote Canadian town of Gander in the days after 9/11.

The action starts on 11 September 2001 - a day on which nearly 3,000 Americans were killed by terrorists - quite a sensitive topic! Yet the show itself is very effective in telling a little known, but inspiring story.

When the hijacked planes were flown into the World Trade Centre, the Pentagon and a field in Pennsylvania, US airspace was shut down and planes were ordered to land.

No one knew whether this was part of a larger attack on the US and where might a further attack take place? Some 38 planes and 6,579 passengers were diverted to Gander, a remote town in Newfoundland, Canada. A town with a huge airport at roughly the mid-point in the London-New York run and built to refuel planes in the days before jet engines, but now largely superfluous.

Passengers sitting in planes on the tarmac for 24 hours: only so many flight movies to watch; only so many hours left on mobile phones! What has happened outside? Has World War III commenced?

Eventually, passengers were allowed to disembark but were required to leave their luggage behind.

Ritchie Stevenson (continued)

They piled on buses to be billeted in schools, shops and homes.

Food must be found, lodgings identified. Accommodation needed to be provided! The population has doubled! Tension is high!

But new friendships and relationships were being formed. Food is shared. Rooms provided in homes and the local school provided opportunities to meet new faces and start new conversations! Hospitality provided to strangers, now friends! Instruments provide new tunes and new songs are sung!

These pressures have provided a new outlook on life for some, and new relationships for others.

Out of this background has arisen a most unusual musical production - a direct story about being good to one another!

The last time I had heard the phrase "come from away" was during my years in Broken Hill. It was quite common in 'the Hill' to hear people respond with the words, "I come from away", when asked of a stranger, "where do you come from?" The phrase itself seemed to re-affirm to others that Broken Hill was the present focus of attention and coming from "outside" was a vast response drawing people into a city-state! The specifics of where a person came from were usually immaterial, but the fact that they were here in Broken Hill focused attention on the real importance of the current relationship - after the initial shock of arrival, a search for new friends, new places, new experiences usually began. Initial regret at leaving boyfriends and girlfriends far behind; regret that old plans must be replaced by new; memories of the curling coastal surf or the green, green fields of home!



Ritchie Stevenson (continued)

Having interviewed usually 20 or 30 downcast teachers seeking a re-transfer out of the Hill on Day 1 of Term 1 each year during my stay, I was often surprised at how few came back a second time after my best efforts to assist them ended in failure. These people had begun to settle in!

At the time I was in Broken Hill the Teachers' Federation's practice was to organise a "Welcome in" for new teachers in February at the beginning of the year in the cool, grapevine entwined verandahs of the beer garden at the Pig and Whistle Hotel in Cobalt Street. And for those leaving in December there was the "Welcome Out" to say farewell. The Pig and Whistle Hotel opened in 1888 and closed in 2003, but I daresay there is a current replacement venue for today's teachers.

I guess this practice and terminology established a clear-cut and uplifting distinction between teachers in other locations and others coming to this isolated town "from away". Strangely, following this latter function, some teachers actually withdrew their application for transfer!



Scenes from Broken Hill

Do you have a story about "The Hill"? Share it with us please.

I live in the "silver city"
Filled with talent and calm.
The locals here, so friendly
A sense of old world charm.
This simple city stole my heart,
So happily I say,
Broken Hill, my happy home, forever I will stay.

Written January 13th, 2005 © Jan 2005, Chantelle Fry

OPINION PIECE

Retired? You Don't Miss Working? You Miss People Perhaps

by Phil Smith, Freelance Journalist

You may well know this already but here is the proof and it's good advice, too.

In 1938, Harvard researchers embarked on a study that continues to this day to find out: What makes us happy in life? The researchers gathered health records from 724 people from all over the world, asking detailed questions about their lives at two-year intervals.

As participants entered mid and late life, the Harvard Study often asked about retirement. Based on their responses, the number one challenge people faced in retirement was **not being able to replace the social connections that had sustained them for so long at work.**

When it comes to retirement, we often stress about things like financial concerns, health problems, and caregiving. But people who fare the best in retirement find ways to cultivate **connections.**

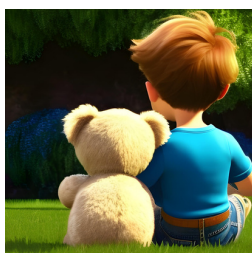
And yet, almost no one talks about the importance of developing new sources of meaning and purpose.

Leo DeMarco, another participant, had a similar feeling: After he retired as a high school teacher, he found it hard to stay in touch with his colleagues. "I get spiritual sustenance from talking shop. It's wonderful to help someone acquire skills", he said. "Teaching young people was what started my whole process of exploring".

This realisation teaches us an important lesson, not only about retirement, but about work itself: We are often shrouded in financial concerns and the pressure of deadlines, so we don't notice how significant our work relationships are until they're gone.

Maybe it's time to come back to an IRSEA Luncheon and see your old friends again?
(Editor)

***Do you have an opinion about something?
Then let us know about it. Let's have a conversation.***



We didn't realise we were
making memories,
We just knew
we were having fun!

A. A. Milne

The Tale of the Scurvey Elephant

by Peg Craddock

My first appointment was at Granville Central Infants in 1952. Seven hundred and fifty children were enrolled there. The barriers between all departments consisted of lines of paint across the playgrounds.

My class was a streamed 1F. There were supposedly no classes of 50 or more in the state, but I had 57, only six of whom spoke English. Eight were on the roll of the 1E class next door, but were actually in my classroom with kegs of nails and other building supplies kept under the blackboard. Most children in the class were children of what were then called 'Displaced Persons.'

Miss Pittock, the Mistress was wonderful. One morning, there was a note on the timebook telling her 'young ladies', that we were to go to the staffroom and wait for her. The secondary department staff were to do our playground duty. Bill Rose, who later became a friend of ours, was one of them. We were told that just before Miss Pittock had left the previous afternoon, she received a VIP, (no not the usual meaning), but a VERY IRATE PARENT! He had said his child had been called a scurvy elephant and he demanded the teacher responsible be reprimanded. Miss Pittock told us she would love to know what really had been said!.

At recess, Nona Dart, (many of you would have known her), and I were on playground duty. The man on playground duty in the girls' playground, was a retired Inspector of schools (mentioned in the book about the history of the Inspectorate). The teacher who had been supervising the tuck shop came bounding across the playground shouting, "Eureka! I actually said he was a disturbing element!". Nona and I could see the gentleman with his walking stick in the girls' playground almost double up with laughter. The story had spread.

Many years later, in Walgett, at the Walgett Aboriginal Education Conference, we were waiting to be called to take seats for the dinner, catered for and served by the Home Science staff and students from the high school. (I must give them a plug. They did a wonderful job) Bill Rose and I were chatting about the Granville days when a delegate from Western Region came up to us and told Bill he had to hear this fabulous story. He had just been told by someone about the Scurvy Elephant, only getting some of the details correct. When Bill and I laughed, the man said he knew we would enjoy it. Bill told him firmly that it hadn't happened 'back o'Bourke', but at Granville and that he had done playground duty that day and I was on the Infants' staff. We wouldn't tell him the name of the teacher involved, but he went to tell his informant that he had got the story's location from the wrong school. Neither Bill, nor I, would tell Tom Allport the name of the teacher, involved either.

She was actually an extremely good teacher, and one afternoon, she and I were on the railway platform, waiting for the train to the city to meet up with other staff for a dinner for Miss Pittock's birthday, when a man nodded to her and said, "Good afternoon, Miss__" She replied and then told her he was the father of one of her children, meaning of course, her students! The woman sitting on the other side, on hearing this, completely misunderstood the context of children meaning students, snorted and sniffed, stood up and marched away. We both laughed.

Peg Craddock was the wife of the late Laurie Craddock. It is so encouraging to receive a story from one of our widows who was married to a past IRSEA member.

We invite all widows on our mailing list to send us their stories.

IRSEA Awards Information

by Graham Dawson

In 2022, the IRSEA Executive Committee approved the establishment of a series of awards to recognise the contribution of its members, and other approved non-members, to the life and objectives of IRSEA and the advancement of public education.

The awards and the criteria for their award are detailed below.

1. Life Membership

1.1 Criteria

Life Membership is the highest honour conferred by IRSEA.

Life Membership is reserved for a current, full and financial member for his/her:

- dedicated commitment to IRSEA;
- long-term and outstanding contribution to the membership;
- profound and positive impact on the life of IRSEA; and
- commitment and contribution to public education in NSW and/or internationally.

Usually, there will be no more than two life members at any one time, but the Executive Committee will have the option of overriding this condition in exceptional circumstances.

1.2 Nomination

Nomination will be made by at least three current, full, financial members using the approved Life Membership Nomination form.

Nomination may be proposed at any time but Life Membership will be conferred at the IRSEA Annual General Meeting for the year the nomination is approved.

1.3 Selection Process

Unanimous approval by a full meeting of the Executive Committee.

2. Outstanding Service Award

2.1 Criteria

For current or past, (allows for posthumous nomination) full IRSEA members who have made long-term, significant and high-value leadership contributions to IRSEA and its members.

2.2 Nomination

Nomination by at least two current, financial, full IRSEA members using the approved Outstanding Service Award Nomination form. Nominations may be proposed at any time.

2.3 Selection Process

Endorsed by a majority of Executive Committee Members and approved by the President.

3. Honorary Membership

3.1 Criteria

Awarded to a person who is not otherwise an IRSEA member or eligible for IRSEA membership, and who has made a significant contribution to IRSEA and the achievement of its objectives, or who has made a significant contribution to public education.

3.2 Nomination

Nomination by two current, financial, full IRSEA member using the approved Honorary Membership form. Nomination may be proposed at any time.

3.3 Selection Process

Endorsed by a majority of Executive Committee members and approved by the President.

IRSEA Awards Information

by Graham Dawson

The nomination forms for these awards have been finalised and are included in this newsletter and can also be found on the IRSEA website (www.irsea.org.au).

The Executive Committee is keen to honour those members, and other educators, who meet the criteria for the awards and we invite all members to consider nominating appropriate recipients.

We have already conferred a number of Outstanding Service Awards to members and we look forward to continuing to honour our members who have made a significant contribution to IRSEA and public education.

If you would like any more information about the awards please contact Graham Dawson at, grahamd48@gmail.com or Brian Davies at, secretary@irsea.org.au.

We look forward to receiving your nominations.

PROVOKING OUR THINKING

Intelligent Classrooms: What AI Means For The Future Of Education

Artificial intelligence, AI, is changing the world. The world's attention is now fixed on the unfolding impact of Generative AI tools on knowledge and creator economies. Schools, serving as the very epicenters of knowledge and creative work, may well be the first place the broader public sees tangible change take shape.

Leaders and visionaries the world over are actively advancing the applications of this rapidly developing technology. The pace of progress is measured in days and weeks, rather than months and years, and it's only getting faster. The quickening of AI's capabilities and applications mean that its potential impact, both good and bad, is growing rapidly.

Already, we can see around the corner that generative AI systems will have expansive implications for how schools function, teachers work, and how students develop personally and professionally for tomorrow's world of work.

Our northstar must always be the democratization of learning opportunities as we bring the fruits of technological innovation to our classrooms and well beyond them. There will be challenges, to be sure, but the power of human ingenuity to mitigate those challenges is just as real and equally powerful.

In this new era of learning—and make no mistake about it, that is exactly what we are entering—we will, however, need an approach to the deployment of AI in education that is centered on real human flourishing.

Doing so will not only strengthen student learning, but ensure that future generations thrive in ever more human and humane ways. That's the kind of tomorrow in which all of our children and our planet can thrive.

Excerpts from a paper written by American educator, Vicki Phillips.
[Forbes Magazine, 7 June, 2023](#)



Institute of Retired Senior Education Administrators

**LIFE MEMBERSHIP
NOMINATION FORM**

The highest honour conferred by IRSEA in recognition of dedicated commitment to IRSEA; long-term and outstanding contribution to the membership; a profound and positive impact on the life of IRSEA; and commitment and contribution to public education in NSW and/or internationally.

Name of Nominee: **Name of Proposer 1:**

Name of Proposer 2: **Name of Seconder:**

Date Submitted:

REASONS FOR NOMINATION (To be completed by Proposer - Limit to 250 words)

Signature of Proposers:/..... **Signature of Seconder:**

FOR IRSEA USE ONLY

Date of Receipt: Date of Consideration:

Decision: Date of Award:

President Signature: Date:

When completed please email the form to the Secretary, IRSEA at
secretary@irseas.org.au



Institute of Retired Senior Education Administrators

**OUTSTANDING SERVICE AWARD
NOMINATION FORM**

To recognise outstanding contribution in advancing the mission and objectives of the Institute and for exceptional leadership in bringing great value to the organisation, its members and to the advancement of public education.

Name of Nominee: **Name of Proposer:**

Name of Seconder: **Date Submitted:**

REASONS FOR NOMINATION (To be completed by Proposer - Limit to 250 words)

Signature of Proposer: **Signature of Seconder:**

FOR IRSEA USE ONLY

Date of Receipt: Date of Consideration:

Decision: Date of Award:

President Signature: Date:

When completed please email the form to the Secretary, IRSEA at
secretary@irseas.org.au



Institute of Retired Senior Education Administrators

**HONORARY MEMBERSHIP
NOMINATION FORM**

Awarded to a person not otherwise a member of IRSEA or eligible for IRSEA membership, and who has made a significant contribution to IRSEA and the achievement of its objectives, or who has made a significant contribution to public education.

Name of Nominee: **Name of Proposer:**

Name of Seconder: **Date Submitted:**

REASONS FOR NOMINATION (To be completed by Proposer - Limit to 250 words)

Signature of Proposer: **Signature of Seconder:**

FOR IRSEA USE ONLY

Date of Receipt: Date of Consideration:

Decision: Date of Award:

President Signature: Date:

When completed please email the form to the Secretary, IRSEA at
secretary@irseas.org.au

VALE, Barry Higgins

Barry Higgins, a very popular member of IRSEA, finally succumbed to Alzheimers in late June.

Tributes have been received from many people and all of them, without exception, spoke of Barry's fun loving and vibrant personality. Everyone stated it was a pleasure to work with him and their memories are all connected to this great educator who found a lot of joy in the work that he did.

Barry Raymond Higgins entered the teaching service in 1965. He came from Milton on the South Coast, a young man from a family of dairy farmers.

He was the principal of Kambora PS before being appointed as an Inspector to the Miller Inspectorate. He also managed, at one time in his career, the Taronga Zoo Education Centre.

He then moved onto Cluster Director in Met North during the Schools Renewal time. A colleague remembers that when he was one of the team at Dee Why Education Resource Centre (ERC), his jovial nature got them all through many a tough period during that time of the restructure.

Barry was very committed to Special Education and colleagues remember his professionalism, analytical mind, and passion for public education. He is specially remembered as someone who could diffuse any confrontational situation whether it was principal, Union official, parent or teacher.

Barry's funeral was held on July 3 at Saint Stephens Church, Normanhurst.



Lunch Meeting and Booking Slip

Friday, 4 August 2023

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 Friday, 21 July 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..... (@ \$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, on **Friday 4 August**.

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 July, 2023

I agree / do not agree (cross out one) that photographs of me in professional or social conditions may be published in newsletters and on the IRSEA website.